

PROGRESS • RUSSIAN CLASSICS SERIES





Ivan Turgenev. Engraving by I. Pozhalostin (1884) made from an *étude* in oils by N. Dmitriev-Orenburgsky (1879) for a hunting scene outside Paris

IVAN
TURGENEV

A Hunter's Sketches



PROGRESS PUBLISHERS
MOSCOW

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First printing 1922

4702010100

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A HUNTER'S SKETCHES

KHOR AND KALINICH

Anyone who has chanced to pass from Bolkhov Uyezd into Zhizdra District must have been impressed by the striking difference between the race of people in Orel Gubernia and the population of the Kaluga Gubernia. The peasant of Orel is not tall, is bent in figure, sullen and suspicious in his looks; he lives in wretched little hovels of aspen-wood, labours as a serf in the fields, and engages in no kind of trading, is miserably fed, and wears bast shoes. The rentpaying peasant of Kaluga lives in roomy huts of pine-wood; he is tall, bold, and cheerful in his looks, neat and clean of countenance; he carries on a trade in butter and tar, and on holidays he wears high-boots. The village of Orel Gubernia (we are speaking now of the eastern part of the gubernia) is usually situated in the midst of ploughed fields, near a ravine which has been converted into a filthy pond. Except for a few of the ever-accommodating willows and two or three gaunt birch-trees, you do not see a tree for a mile round; hut is huddled up against hut, their roofs crudely thatched with rotting straw... The villages of Kaluga, on the contrary, are generally surrounded by forest; the huts stand more freely, are more upright, and have boarded roofs; the gates fasten closely, the fence is not broken down nor trailing about; there are no gaps to invite the visits of the passing pig... And things are much better in the Kaluga Gubernia for the hunter. In Orel Gubernia the last of the woods and copses will have disappeared five years hence, and there is no

trace of moorland left; in Kaluga, on the contrary, the moors extend over tens, the forest over hundreds of miles, and that splendid bird, the grouse, is still extant there; there is an abundance of the friendly great snipe, and the loud-clapping partridge cheers and startles the sportsman and his dog by its abrupt upward flight.

On a visit to Zhizdra Uyezd in search of sport, I met in the fields a petty landlord of the Kaluga Gubernia called Polutikin, and made his acquaintance. He was an enthusiastic hunter; it follows, therefore, that he was an excellent fellow. He was liable, indeed, to a few weaknesses; he used, for instance, to pay his addresses to every unmarried heiress in the gubernia, and when he had been refused her hand and house, broken-hearted he confided his sorrows to all his friends and acquaintances, and continued to shower offerings of sour peaches and other raw produce from his garden upon the young lady's relatives; he was fond of repeating one and the same joke, which, in spite of Mr. Polutikin's appreciation of its merits, had certainly never amused anyone; he admired the works of Akim Nakhimov and the novel *Pinna*; he stammered; he called his dog Astronomer; instead of "however" said "howsomever"; and had established in his household French cuisine, the secret of which consisted, according to his cook's interpretation, in a complete transformation of the natural taste of each dish; in this *artiste's* hands meat assumed the flavour of fish, fish of mushrooms, macaroni of gunpowder; to make up for this, not a single carrot went into the soup without taking the shape of a rhombus or a trapezium. But, with the exception of these few and insignificant failings, Mr. Polutikin was, as has been said already, an excellent fellow.

On the first day of my acquaintance with Mr. Polutikin, he invited me to stay the night at his house.

"It will be five versts farther to my house," he added. "It's a long way to walk; let us first go to Khor's." (The reader must excuse my omitting his stammer.)

"Who is Khor?"

"A peasant of mine. He is quite close by here."

We went in that direction. In a well-cultivated clearing in the middle of the forest rose Khor's solitary homestead. It consisted of several pine-wood buildings, linked by plank fences; a porch ran along the front of the principal building, supported on slender posts. We went in. We were met by a young lad of twenty, tall and good-looking.

"Ah, Fedya! Is Khor at home?" Mr. Polutikin asked him.

"No. Khor has gone into town," answered the lad, smiling and showing a row of snow-white teeth. "You would like the little cart brought out?"

"Yes, my boy, the little cart. And bring us some kvass."

We went into the cottage. Not a single cheap print from Suzdal was pasted up on the clean logs of the walls; in the corner, before the heavy, holy image in its silver setting, a lamp was burning; the table of linden-wood had been lately washed and scrubbed; between the joists and in the cracks of the window-frames there were no lively Prussian beetles running about, nor gloomy cockroaches in hiding. The young lad soon reappeared with a great white pitcher filled with excellent kvass, a huge slice of wheaten bread, and a dozen salted cucumbers in a wooden bowl. He put all these provisions on the table, and then, leaning with his back against the door, began to gaze smilingly at us. We had not had time to finish eating our repast when the cart was already rattling before the doorstep. We went out. A curly-headed, rosy-cheeked boy of fifteen was sitting in the cart as driver, and with difficulty holding in the well-fed piebald horse. Round the cart stood six young giants, very like one another and Fedya.

"All of these Khor's sons!" said Polutikin.

"Yes, they are," put in Fedya, who had come after us on to the step; "but that's not all of them: Potap is in the wood, and Sidor has gone with old Khor to the town. Look out, Vasya," he went on, turning to the coachman, "drive like the wind; you are driving the master. Only mind what you're about over the ruts, and easy a little; see you don't damage the cart over and upset the master's stomach!"

The other Khorki smiled at Fedya's sally.

"Lift Astronomer in!" Mr. Polutikin called solemnly. Fedya, not without amusement, lifted the dog, who wore a forced smile, into the air and laid him on the bottom of the cart. Vasya let the horse go. We rolled away.

"And here is my counting-house," said Mr. Polutikin suddenly to me, pointing to a little low-pitched house. "Shall we go in?"

"By all means."

"It is no longer used," he observed, going in, "still, it is worth looking at."

The counting-house consisted of two empty rooms. The caretaker, a one-eyed old man, ran in.

"Good day, Minyaich," said Mr. Polutikin, "why don't you have the water ready?"

The one-eyed old man disappeared, and at once returned with a bottle of water and two glasses. "Taste it," Polutikin said to me, "it is my splendid spring water." We drank off a glass each, while the old man bowed low.

"Come, now, I think we can go on," said my new friend. "In that counting-house I sold the merchant Alliluyev ten acres of forest-land for a good price."

We took our seats in the cart, and in half an hour we had reached the court of the manor house.

"Tell me, please," I asked Polutikin at supper, "why does Khor live apart from your other peasants?"

"Well, this is why: he is a clever peasant. Twenty-five years ago his cottage was burnt down; so he came up to my late father and said: 'Allow me, Nikolai Kuzmich,' says he, 'to settle in your forest, on the bog. I will pay you a good rent.' 'But what do you want to settle on the bog for?' 'Oh, I want to; only, your honour, Nikolai Kuzmich, be so good as not to claim any labour from me, but fix a rent as you think fit.' 'Fifty rubles a year!' 'Very well.' 'But no arrears, mind!' 'Of course, no arrears'; and so he settled on the bog. Since then they have called him Khor."

"Well, and has he grown rich?" I inquired.

"Yes, he has grown rich. Now he pays me a round hundred for rent, and I shall raise it again, I dare say. I have said to him more than once, 'Buy your freedom, Khor; come, buy your freedom.' But he declares, the rogue, that he can't; has no money, he says. As though that were likely."

The next day, directly after our morning tea, we started out hunting again. As we were driving through the village, Mr. Polutikin ordered the coachman to stop at a low-pitched cottage and called loudly, "Kalinich!"

"Coming, your honour, coming," sounded a voice from the yard; "I am tying on my shoes."

We went on at a walk; outside the village a man of about forty overtook us. He was tall and thin, with a small head held erect. It was Kalinich. His good-humoured swarthy face, somewhat pitted, pleased me from the first glance. Kalinich (as I learnt afterwards) went hunting every day with his master, carried his bag, and sometimes also his gun. noted where game was to be found, fetched water,

built shanties, and gathered strawberries, and ran to fetch the droshky; Mr. Polutikin could not stir a step without him. Kalinich was a man of the merriest and gentlest disposition; he was constantly singing to himself in a low voice and looking tranquilly about him. He spoke a little through his nose, with a laughing twinkle in his light-blue eyes, and he had a habit of plucking at his scanty, wedge-shaped beard. He walked not rapidly, but with long strides, leaning lightly on a long thin staff. He addressed me more than once during the day, and he waited on me without obsequiousness, but he looked after his master as if he were a child. When the unbearable heat drove us at midday to seek shelter, he took us to his bee-garden in the very heart of the forest. There Kalinich opened the little hut for us, which was hung round with bunches of dry scented herbs. He made us comfortable on a bedding of fresh hay, and then put a kind of bag of network over his head, took a knife, a little pot, and a smouldering stick, and went to the hive to cut out some honeycomb for us. We had a draught of spring water after the warm transparent honey, and then dropped asleep to the sound of the monotonous humming of the bees and the rustling chatter of the leaves.

A slight gust of wind awakened me. I opened my eyes and saw Kalinich: he was sitting on the threshold of the half-opened door, carving a spoon with his knife. I gazed a long time admiring his face, as sweet and clear as an evening sky. Mr. Polutikin, too, woke up. We did not get up at once. After our long walk and our deep sleep it was pleasant to lie without moving in the hay; we felt weary and languid in body, our faces were in a slight glow of warmth, our eyes were closed in delicious laziness. At last we got up and set off on our wanderings again till evening.

At supper I began again to talk of Khor and Kalinich. "Kalinich is a good peasant," Mr. Polutikin told me. "He is a willing and useful peasant; but he can't farm his land properly; I am always taking him away from it. He goes out hunting every day with me . . . You can judge for yourself how his farming must fare."

I agreed with him, and we went to bed.

The next day Mr. Polutikin was obliged to go to town about his lawsuit with his neighbour Pichukov. This neighbour Pichukov had ploughed over some land of Polutikin's and had flogged a peasant woman of his on this same piece of land. I went out hunting alone, and before evening I turned into Khor's house. On the threshold of the cottage I was met by an old man—bald, short, broad-shouldered,

and stout—Khor himself. I looked with curiosity at the man. The cut of his face recalled Socrates: there was the same high, knobby forehead, the same little eyes, the same snub nose. We went into the cottage together. The same Fedya brought me some milk and rye bread. Khor sat down on a bench and, quietly stroking his curly beard, entered into conversation with me. He seemed to know his own value; he spoke and moved slowly; from time to time a chuckle came from between his long moustaches.

We discussed the sowing, the crops, the peasant's life . . . He always seemed to agree with me; only afterwards I had a sense of awkwardness and felt I was talking foolishly. Our conversation was thus rather curious. Khor, doubtless through caution, expressed himself very obscurely at times. Here is a specimen of our talk.

"Tell me, Khor," I said to him, "why don't you buy your freedom from your master?"

"And what would I buy my freedom for? Now I know my master, and I know my rent . . . We have a good master."

"It's always better to be free," I remarked. Khor gave me a dubious look.

"Surely," he said.

"Well, then, why don't you buy your freedom?"

Khor shook his head.

"What would you have me buy it with, your honour?"

"Oh, come, now, old man!"

"If Khor were thrown among free men," he continued in an undertone, as though to himself, "everyone without a beard would be a better man than Khor."

"Then shave your beard."

"What is a beard? A beard is grass: one can cut it."

"Well, then?"

"But Khor will be a merchant straightaway; and merchants have a fine life, and they have beards."

"Why, do you do a little trading, too?" I asked him.

"We trade in a little butter and a little tar . . . Would your honour like the cart put to?"

"You're a close man and keep a tight rein on your tongue," I thought to myself. "No," I said aloud, "I don't want the cart; I shall be hunting near your homestead tomorrow, and if you let me, I will stay the night in your hay-barn."

"You are very welcome. But will you be comfortable in the barn? I will tell the women to lay a sheet and put you a pillow . . . Hey, women!" he cried, getting up from his place. "Here, women! And you, Fedya, go with them. Women, you know, are foolish folk."

A quarter of an hour later Fedya conducted me with a lantern to the barn. I threw myself down on the fragrant hay; my dog curled himself up at my feet; Fedya wished me good-night; the door creaked and slammed to. For rather a long time I could not get to sleep. A cow came up to the door and breathed heavily twice; the dog growled at her with dignity; a pig passed by, grunting pensively; a horse somewhere near began to munch the hay and snort . . . At last I fell asleep.

At sunrise Fedya awakened me. This brisk, lively young man pleased me; and, from what I could see, he was old Khor's favourite, too. They used to banter one another in a very friendly way. The old man came to meet me. Whether because I had spent the night under his roof, or for some other reason, Khor certainly treated me far more cordially than the day before.

"The samovar is ready," he told me with a smile, "let us go and have tea."

We took our seats at the table. A robust-looking peasant woman, one of his daughters-in-law, brought in a jug of milk. All his sons came one after another into the cottage.

"What a fine set of fellows you have!" I remarked to the old man.

"Yes," he said, breaking off a tiny piece of sugar with his teeth; "they have no cause to complain of me and my old woman, seemingly."

"And do they all live with you?"

"Yes; they choose to, themselves, and so they live here."

"And are they all married?"

"Here's one not married, the scamp!" he answered, pointing to Fedya, who was leaning as before against the door. "Vasya, he's still too young; he can wait."

"And why should I get married?" retorted Fedya; "I'm very well off as I am. What do I want a wife for? To squabble with, eh?"

"Now then, you . . . ah, I know you! You wear silver rings . . . You'd always be after the girls up at the manor house . . . 'Go off with you, for shame!'" the old man went on mimicking the servant girls. "Ah, I know you, you're a fine gentleman!"

"But what's the good of a peasant woman?"

"A peasant woman—is a labourer," said Khor seriously, "she is the peasant's servant."

"And what do I want with a labourer?"

"I dare say, you'd like to play with the fire and let others burn their fingers; we know the sort of chap you are."

"Well, marry me off, then. Well, why don't you answer?"

"There, that's enough, that's enough, giddy pate! You see we're disturbing the gentleman. I'll marry you off, depend on it . . . And you, your honour, don't be vexed with him; you see, he's only a baby; he's not had time to get much sense."

Fedya shook his head.

"Is Khor at home?" sounded a well-known voice; and Kalinich came into the cottage with a bunch of wild strawberries in his hands, which he had gathered for his friend Khor. The old man gave him a warm welcome. I looked with surprise at Kalinich. I confess I had not expected such a delicate attention on the part of a peasant.

That day I started out to hunt four hours later than usually, and the following three days I spent at Khor's. My new friends interested me. I don't know how I had gained their confidence, but they began to talk to me without constraint. The two friends were not at all alike. Khor was a positive, practical man, with a head for management, a rationalist; Kalinich, on the other hand, belonged to the order of idealists and dreamers, of romantic and enthusiastic spirits. Khor had a grasp of actuality—that is to say, he built himself a fine homestead, had saved a little money, kept on good terms with his master and the other authorities; Kalinich wore shoes of bast, and lived from hand to mouth. Khor had reared a large family, who were obedient and united; Kalinich had once had a wife, whom he had been afraid of, and he had had no children. Khor knew Mr. Polutikin inside out; Kalinich revered his master. Khor loved Kalinich and took protecting care of him; Kalinich loved and respected Khor. Khor spoke little, chuckled, and kept his thoughts to himself; Kalinich expressed himself with warmth, though he had not the flow of fine language of a smart factory hand. But Kalinich was endowed with powers which even Khor recognised; he could charm away haemorrhages, fits, madness, and worms; his bees always did well; he had a light hand. Khor asked him before me to introduce a newly bought horse to his stable, and with scrupulous gravity Kalinich carried out the old sceptic's request. Kalinich was in closer contact with nature; Khor with men and society. Kalinich had no liking for argument, and

believed in everything blindly; Khor had reached even an ironical attitude towards life. He had seen and experienced much, and I learnt a good deal from him. For instance, from his account I learnt that every year before mowing-time a small, peculiar-looking cart makes its appearance in the villages. In this cart sits a man in a long coat, who sells scythes. He charges one ruble twenty-five kopeks—a ruble and a half in notes—for ready money; four rubles if he gives credit. All the peasants, of course, take the scythes from him on credit. In two or three weeks he reappears and asks for the money. As the peasant has only just cut his oats, he is able to pay him; he goes with the merchant to the tavern, and there the debt is settled. Some land-owners conceived the idea of buying the scythes themselves for ready money and letting the peasants have them on credit for the same price; but the peasants seemed dissatisfied, even dejected; they had been deprived of the pleasure of tapping the scythe and listening to the ring of the metal, turning it over and over in their hands, and telling the scoundrelly city-trader twenty times over, "Eh, my friend, you won't take me in with your scythe!"

The same tricks are played over the sale of sickles, only with this difference that the women have a hand in the business then, and they sometimes drive the trader himself to the necessity—for their good, of course—of beating them. But the women suffer most ill-treatment through the following circumstances. Contractors for the supply of stuff for paper factories employ for the purchase of rags a special class of men, who in some districts are called "eagles". Such an "eagle" receives two hundred rubles in bank-notes from the merchant, and starts off in search of his prey. But, unlike the noble bird from whom he has derived his name, he does not swoop down openly and boldly upon it; quite the contrary, the "eagle" has recourse to deceit and cunning. He leaves his cart somewhere in a thicket near the village, and goes himself to the back-yards and back-doors, like someone casually passing, or simply a tramp. The women scent out his proximity and steal out to meet him. The bargain is hurriedly concluded. For a few copper half-pence a woman gives the "eagle" not only every useless rag she has, but often even her husband's shirt and her own petticoat. Of late the women have thought it profitable to steal even from themselves, and to sell hemp in the same way—a great extension and improvement of the business for the "eagles"! To meet this, however, the peasants have grown more cunning in their turn, and on the slightest suspicion, on the most distant rumour

of the approach of an "eagle", they have prompt and sharp recourse to corrective and preventive measures. And, after all, wasn't it disgraceful? To sell the hemp was the men's business—and they certainly do sell it—not in the town (they would have to drag it there themselves), but to traders who come for it, who, for want of scales, reckon forty handfuls to the pood—and you know what a Russian's hand is and what it can hold, especially when he "tries his best"!

A man with little experience of country life, I heard plenty of such descriptions. But Khor was not always the narrator; he questioned me too about many things. He learned that I had been in foreign parts, and his curiosity was aroused. Kalinich was not behind him in curiosity; but he was more attracted by descriptions of nature, of mountains and waterfalls, extraordinary buildings and great cities: Khor was interested in questions of government and administration. He went through everything in order. "Well, is that with them as it is with us, or different? Come, tell us, your honour, how is it?" "Ah, Lord, think of that!" Kalinich would exclaim while I told my story; Khor did not speak, but frowned with his bushy eyebrows, only observing at times, "That wouldn't do for us; and that is a good thing—it's right."

All his inquiries I cannot recount, and it is unnecessary; but from our conversations I carried away one conviction, which my readers will certainly not anticipate . . . the conviction that Peter the Great was preeminently a Russian—Russian, above all, in his reforms. The Russian is so convinced of his own strength and powers that he is not averse to coercing himself; he takes little interest in his past, and looks boldly forward. What is good he likes, what is sensible he will have, and where it comes from he does not care. His vigorous common sense is fond of ridiculing the thin theorising of the German; but he considered the Germans "curious folk" and was ready to learn from them. Thanks to his exceptional position, his practical independence, Khor told me a great deal which you could not extract or—as the peasants say—grind with a grindstone out of any other man. He did, in fact, understand his position. Talking with Khor, I for the first time listened to the simple, wise discourse of the Russian peasant. His knowledge was, fairly wide, but he could read, though Kalinich could.

"That ne'er-do-well has a head for school learning," observed Khor, "and his bees never die in the winter."

"But haven't you had your children taught to read?"

Khor was silent a minute. "Fedya can read."

"And the others?"

"The others can't."

"And why?"

The old man made no answer, and changed the subject. However, sensible as he was, he had many prejudices and crotchets. He despised women, for instance, from the depths of his soul, and in his merry moments he amused himself by jesting at their expense. His wife was a cross old woman who lay all day long on the stove-shelf, incessantly grumbling and scolding; her sons paid no attention to her, but she kept her daughters-in-law went in fear of her. Very significantly, the mother-in-law sings in the Russian ballad: "What a son art thou to me! What a head of a household! Thou dost not beat thy wife; thou dost not beat thy young wife..." I once attempted to intercede for the daughters-in-law, and tried to rouse Khor's sympathy; but he met me with the tranquil rejoinder, "Why should I want to trouble about such... trifles; let the women fight it out... If anybody tries to tear them apart, it only makes it worse... and it's not worth dirtying one's hands over."

Sometimes the spiteful old woman got down from the stove-shelf and called the yard dog in, crying, "Here, here, doggie"; and then beat it on its thin back with the poker, or she would stand in the porch and "bark", as Khor expressed it, at everyone that passed. She stood in awe of her husband though, and would return, at his command, to her place on the stove-shelf. It was specially curious to hear Khor and Kalinich argue whenever Mr. Polutikin was touched upon.

"There, Khor, do let him alone," Kalinich would say.

"But why doesn't he order some boots for you?" Khor retorted.

"Eh? boots!... what do I want with boots? I am a peasant."

"Well, so am I a peasant, but look!" And Khor lifted up his leg and showed Kalinich a boot which looked as if it had been cut out of a mammoth's hide.

"As if you were like one of us!" replied Kalinich.

"Well, at least he might pay for your bast shoes; you go out hunting with him; you must use a pair a day."

"He does give me something for bast shoes."

"Yes, he gave you two coppers last year."

Kalinich turned away in vexation, and Khor went off into a chuckle, his little eyes completely disappearing.

Kalinich sang rather sweetly and played a little on the balalaika.

Khor would listen to him, then let his head drop on one side and begin to chime in, in a lugubrious voice. He was particularly fond of the song, "Ah, my fate, my fate!" Fedya never lost an opportunity of making fun of his father, saying, "What are you so mournful about, old man?" But Khor leaned his cheek on his hand, closed his eyes, and continued to mourn over his fate . . . Yet at other times there could not be a more active man; he was always busy over something—mending the cart, patching up the fence, looking after the harness. He did not insist on a very high degree of cleanliness, however; and, in answer to some remark of mine, said once, "A cottage ought to smell as if it were lived in."

"Look," I answered, "how clean it is in Kalinich's bee-garden."

"The bees would not live there else, your honour," he said with a sigh.

"Tell me," he asked me another time, "have you an estate of your own?"

"Yes."

"Far from here?"

"A hundred versts."

"Do you live on your land, your honour?"

"Yes."

"But you like tramping your gun best, I dare say?"

"Yes, I must confess I do."

"And you do well, your honour; shoot grouse to your heart's content, and change your bailiff pretty often."

On the fourth day Mr. Polutikin sent for me in the evening. I was sorry to part from the old man. I took my seat with Kalinich in the trap.

"Well, good-bye, Khor—good luck to you," I said, "good-bye, Fedya."

"Good-bye, your honour, good-bye; don't forget us."

We started; there was the first red glow of sunset.

"It will be a fine day tomorrow," I remarked, looking at the clear sky.

"No, it will rain," Kalinich replied, "the ducks yonder are splashing, and the scent of the grass is strong."

We drove into the copse. Kalinich began singing in an undertone as he was jolted up and down on the driver's seat, and he kept gazing and gazing at the sunset.

The next day I left the hospitable roof of Mr. Polutikin.

ERMOLAI AND THE MILLER'S WIFE

One evening I went with the huntsman Ermolai "stand-shooting". But perhaps all my readers may not know what "stand-shooting" is, I will tell you.

A quarter of an hour before sunset in springtime you go out into the woods with your gun, but without your dog. You seek out a spot for yourself on the outskirts of the forest, take a look round, examine your caps, and glance at your companion. A quarter of an hour passes; the sun has set, but it is still light in the forest; the sky is clear and transparent; the birds are chattering and twittering; the young grass shines with the brilliance of emerald . . . You wait. Gradually the recesses of the forest grow dark; the blood-red glow of the evening sky creeps slowly along the roots and the trunks of the trees, and keeps rising higher and higher, passes from the lower, still almost leafless branches, to the motionless, slumbering tree-tops . . . And now even the topmost branches are darkened; the purple sky fades to dark-blue. The forest fragrance grows stronger; there is a scent of warmth and damp earth; the fluttering breeze dies away at your side. The birds go to sleep—not all at once—but after their kinds; first the finches are hushed, a few minutes later the warblers, and after them the yellow buntings. In the forest it grows darker and darker. The trees melt together into great masses of blackness; in the dark-blue sky the first stars come timidly out. All the birds are asleep. Only the redstarts and the nuthatches are still chirping drowsily . . . And now they, too, are still. The last echoing call of the chiff-chaff rings over our heads; the oriole's melancholy cry sounds somewhere in the distance; then—the nightingale's first note. Your heart is weary with suspense, when suddenly—but only hunters can understand me—suddenly in the deep hush there is a peculiar croaking and whirring sound, the measured sweep of swift wings is heard, and the

snipe, gracefully bending its long beak, sails smoothly from behind a dark bush to meet your shot.

That is the meaning of "stand-shooting".

And so I had gone out stand-shooting with Ermolai. But excuse me, reader: I must first introduce Ermolai to you.

Picture to yourself a tall gaunt man of forty-five, with a long thin nose, a narrow forehead, little grey eyes, a bristling head of hair, and thick sarcastic lips. This man wore, winter and summer alike, a yellow nankeen coat of foreign cut, but with a sash round the waist; he wore blue pantaloons and a cap of astrakhan presented to him in a merry hour by a spendthrift landowner. Two bags were fastened on to his sash, one in front, skilfully tied into two halves, for powder and for shot; the other behind for game; wadding Ermolai used to produce out of his seemingly inexhaustible cap. With the money he gained by the game he sold, he might easily have bought himself a cartridge-box and powder-flask; but he never once even contemplated such a purchase, and continued to load his gun after his old fashion, exciting the admiration of all beholders by the skill with which he avoided the risks of spilling or mixing his powder and shot. His gun was a single-barrelled flint-lock, endowed, moreover, with a villainous habit of "kicking". It was due to this that Ermolai's right cheek was permanently swollen to a larger size than the left. How he ever succeeded in hitting anything with this gun, it would take a shrewd man to discover—but he did. He had, too, a setter-dog, by name Valetka, a most extraordinary creature. Ermolai never fed him. "Me feed a dog!" he reasoned. "Why, a dog's a clever beast; he finds a living for himself." And certainly, though Valetka's extreme thinness was a shock even to an indifferent observer, he still lived and had a long life; and in spite of his pitiable position he was not even once lost, and never showed an inclination to desert his master. Once indeed, in his youth, he had absented himself for two days, on courting bent, but this folly was soon over with him. Valetka's most noticeable peculiarity was his unruffled indifference to everything in the world . . . If it were not a dog I was speaking of, I should have called him "disillusioned". He usually sat with his cropped tail curled up under him, scowling and twitching at times, and he never smiled. (It is well known that dogs can smile, and smile very sweetly.) He was exceedingly ugly; and the idle house-serfs never lost an opportunity of jeering cruelly at his appearance; but all these jeers, and even blows, Valetka bore with astonishing composure. He was a source

of special delight to the cooks, who would all leave their work at once and give him chase with shouts and abuse, whenever, through a weakness not confined to dogs, he thrust his hungry nose through the half-open door of the kitchen, tempted with its warmth and appetising smells. He distinguished himself by untiring energy in the chase, and had a good scent; but if he chanced to overtake a slightly wounded hare, he devoured it with relish to the last bone, somewhere in the cool shade under the green bushes, at a respectful distance from Ermolai, who was abusing him in every known and unknown dialect.

Ermolai belonged to one of my neighbours, a landlord of the old style. Landlords of the old style don't care for game, and prefer the domestic fowl. Only on extraordinary occasions, such as birthdays, namedays, and elections, the cooks of the old-fashioned landlords set to work to prepare some long-beaked birds, and, falling into the state of frenzy peculiar to Russians when they don't quite know what they are doing, they concoct such marvellous sauces for them that the guests examine the proffered dishes curiously and attentively, but rarely make up their minds to try them. Ermolai was under orders to provide his master's kitchen with two brace of grouse and partridges once a month. But he might live where and how he pleased. They had given him up as a man of no use for work of any kind—"bone lazy", they called him. Powder and shot, of course, they did not provide him, following precisely the same principle in virtue of which he did not feed his dog. Ermolai was a very strange kind of man; heedless as a bird, rather fond of talking, awkward and vacant-looking; he was excessively fond of drink, and never could stay long in one place; in walking he shambled along, and rolled from side to side; and yet he got over fifty versts in the day with his rolling, shambling gait. He exposed himself to the most varied adventures; spent the night in the marshes, in trees, on roofs, or under bridges; more than once he had got shut up in lofts, cellars, or barns; he sometimes lost his gun, his dog, his most indispensable garments; got long and severe beatings; but he always returned home after a little while, in his clothes, and with his gun and his dog. One could not call him a cheerful man, though one almost always found him in an even frame of mind; he was looked on generally as an eccentric. Ermolai liked a little chat with a good companion, especially over a glass, but he would not stop long; he would get up and go. "But where the devil are you going? It's dark out of doors." "To Chaplino." "But what's

taking you to Chaplino, six miles away?" "I am going to stay the night at Sofron's there." "But stay the night here." "No, I can't." And Ermolai, with his Valetka, would go off into the dark night, through woods and watercourses, and the peasant Sofron very likely would not let him into his place, and even, I am afraid, might sock him one to teach him "not to disturb honest folks". But none could compare with Ermolai in skill in deep-water fishing in springtime, in catching crayfish with his hands, in tracking game by scent, in snaring quails, in training hawks, in capturing the nightingales who had the greatest variety of notes . . . One thing he could not do, train a dog; he had not patience enough. He had a wife, too. He went to see her once a week. She lived in a wretched, tumbledown little hut, and led a hand-to-mouth existence, never knowing overnight whether she would have food to eat on the morrow; and in every way her lot was a pitiful one. Ermolai, who seemed such a careless and easy-going fellow, treated his wife with cruel harshness; in his own house he assumed a stern and menacing manner; and his poor wife did everything she could to please him, trembled when he looked at her, and spent her last farthing to buy him vodka; and when he stretched himself majestically on the stove and fell into an heroic sleep, she obsequiously covered him with her sheepskin. I happened myself more than once to catch an involuntary look in him of a kind of savage ferocity; I did not like the expression of his face when he finished off a wounded bird with his teeth. But Ermolai never remained more than a day at home, and away from home he was once more the same "Ermolka", as he was called for a hundred miles round, and as he sometimes called himself. The lowest house-serf was conscious of being superior to this vagabond—and perhaps this was precisely why they treated him with friendliness; the peasants at first amused themselves by chasing him and driving him like a hare over the open country, but afterwards they left him alone, and when once they recognised him as "funny", they no longer tormented him, and even gave him bread and entered into talk with him . . . This was the man I took as my huntsman, and with him I went stand-shooting to a great birch wood on the banks of the Ista.

Many Russian rivers, like the Volga, have one bank rugged and precipitous, the other bounded by level meadows; and so it is with the Ista. This small river winds extremely capriciously, coils like a snake, and does not keep a straight course for half a mile together; in some places, from an elevation, one can see the river for ten versts,

with its dykes, its pools and mills, and the gardens on its banks, shut in with willows and thick orchards. There are fish in the Ista in endless numbers, especially roaches (the peasants take them in hot weather from under the bushes with their hands); little sandpipers flutter whistling along the stony banks, which are streaked with cold clear streams; wild ducks swim in the middle of the pools, and look round warily; in the coves under the overhanging cliffs herons stand out in the shade . . . We stood in ambush nearly an hour, killed two brace of wood snipe, and, as we wanted to try our luck again at sunrise (stand-shooting can be done as well in the early morning), we resolved to spend the night at the nearest mill. We came out of the wood and went down the slope. The dark-blue waters of the river ran below; the air was thick with the mists of night. We knocked at the gate. The dogs began barking in the yard.

"Who is there?" asked a hoarse and sleepy voice.

"We are hunters; let us stay the night." There was no reply. "We will pay."

"I will go and tell the master. Sh! Curse the dogs! Go to the devil with you!"

We listened as the workman went into the cottage; he soon came back to the gate. "No," he said, "the master tells me not to let you in."

"Why not?"

"He is afraid; you are hunters, you might set the mill on fire; you've firearms with you, to be sure."

"But what nonsense!"

"We had our mill burnt down last year; some cattle-dealers stayed the night, and they managed to set it on fire somehow."

"But, my good friend, we can't sleep in the open air!"

"That's your business."

He went away, his boots clacking as he walked.

Ermolai promised him various unpleasant things in the future. "Let us go to the village," he brought out at last, with a sigh. But it was two versts to the village.

"Let us stay the night here," I said, "in the open air—the night is warm; the miller will let us have some straw if we pay for it."

Ermolai agreed without discussion. We began again to knock.

"Well, what do you want?" the workman's voice was heard again, "I've told you you can't stay here."

We explained to him what we wanted. He went to consult the

master of the house, and returned with him. The little side gate creaked. The miller appeared, a tall, fat-faced man with a bull neck, round-bellied and corpulent. He agreed to my proposal. A hundred paces from the mill there was a little outhouse open to the air on all sides. They carried straw and hay there for us; the workman set a samovar down on the grass near the river, and, squatting on his heels, began to blow vigorously into its pipe. The embers glowed, and threw a bright light on his young face. The miller ran to wake his wife, and suggested at last that I myself should sleep in the cottage; but I preferred to remain in the open air. The miller's wife brought us milk, eggs, potatoes and bread. Soon the samovar boiled, and we began drinking tea. A mist had risen from the river; there was no wind; from all round came the cry of the corn-crake, and faint sounds from the mill-wheels of drops that dripped from the paddles and of water gurgling through the bars of the lock. We built a small fire on the ground. While Ermolai was baking the potatoes in the embers, I had time to fall into a doze. I was waked by a discreetly subdued whispering near me. I lifted my head; before the fire, on a tub turned upside down, the miller's wife sat talking to my huntsman. By her dress, her movements, and her manner of speaking, I had already recognised that she had been in domestic service, and was neither peasant nor city-bred; but now for the first time I got a clear view of her features. She looked about thirty; her thin, pale face still showed the traces of remarkable beauty; what particularly charmed me was her eyes, large and mournful in expression. She was leaning her elbows on her knees, and had her face in her hands. Ermolai was sitting with his back to me and thrusting sticks into the fire.

"They've the cattle-plague again at Zheltukhina," the miller's wife was saying. "Father Ivan's two cows are dead—Lord have mercy on us!"

"And how are your pigs doing?" asked Ermolai, after a brief pause.

"They're alive."

"You ought to make me a present of a sucking pig."

The miller's wife was silent for a while, then she sighed.

"Who is it you're with?" she asked.

"A gentleman from Kostomarovo."

Ermolai threw a few pine twigs on the fire; they all caught fire at once, and a thick white smoke came puffing into his face.

"Why didn't your husband let us into the cottage?"

"He's afraid."

"Afraid! The fat old tub! Arina Timofeyevna, my sweet, bring me a little glass of spirits."

The miller's wife rose and vanished into the darkness. Ermolai began to sing in an undertone:

*When I went to see my sweetheart,
I wore out all my best boots...*

Arina returned with a small flask and a glass. Ermolai got up, crossed himself, and drank it off at a draught. "Good!" was his comment.

The miller's wife sat down again on the tub.

"Well, Arina Timofeyevna, are you still ailing?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"My cough troubles me at night."

"The gentleman's asleep, it seems," observed Ermolai after a short silence. "Don't go to a doctor, Arina; it will be worse if you do."

"Well, I am not going."

"But come and pay me a visit."

Arina hung down her head dejectedly.

"I will drive my wife out for the occasion," continued Ermolai. "Upon my word, I will."

"You had better wake the gentleman, Ermolai Petrovich; you see, the potatoes are done."

"Oh, let him snore," observed my faithful servant indifferently; "he's tired with walking, so he sleeps sound."

I turned over in the hay. Ermolai got up and came to me. "The potatoes are ready; will you come and eat them?"

I came out of the outhouse; the miller's wife got up from the tub and made to go away. I addressed her:

"Have you kept this mill long?"

"It was a year this Trinity Day."

"And where does your husband come from?"

Arina had not caught my question.

"Where's your husband from?" repeated Ermolai, raising his voice.

"From Belev. He's a Belev townsman."

"And are you too from Belev?"

"No, I'm a serf; I was a serf."

"Whose?"

"Zverkov was my master. Now I am free."

"What Zverkov?"

"Alexander Silich."

"Weren't you his wife's lady's maid?"

"How did you know? Yes."

I looked at Arina with redoubled curiosity and sympathy.

"I know your master," I continued.

"Do you?" she replied in a low voice, and her head drooped.

I must tell the reader why I looked with such sympathy at Arina. During my stay in St. Petersburg I had become by chance acquainted with Mr. Zverkov. He had a rather influential position, and was reputed a man of sense and education. He had a wife, fat, sentimental, lachrymose and spiteful—an ordinary and disagreeable creature; he had, too, a son, the very type of the young swell of today, pampered and stupid. The exterior of Mr. Zverkov himself did not prepossess one in his favour; his little mouselike eyes peeped slyly out of a broad, almost square face, he had a large, sharp nose, with distended nostrils; his close-cropped grey hair stood up like a brush above his furrowed brow; his thin lips were for ever twitching and smiling mawkishly. Mr. Zverkov's favourite position was standing with his short legs wide apart and his podgy hands in his trouser pockets. Once I happened somehow to be driving alone with Mr. Zverkov in a coach out of town. We fell into conversation. As a man of experience and of judgement, Mr. Zverkov began to try to set me in "the path of truth".

"Allow me to observe to you," he piped at last, "all you young people criticise and form judgements on everything at random; you have little knowledge of your own country; Russia, young gentlemen, is an unknown land to you; that's how it is!... You are for ever reading German books. For instance, now you say this and that and the other about anything; for instance, about the house-serfs... Very fine; I don't dispute it's all very fine; but you don't know them; you don't know the kind of people they are." (Mr. Zverkov blew his nose loudly and took a pinch of snuff.) "Allow me to tell you as an illustration one little anecdote; it may perhaps interest you." (Mr. Zverkov cleared his throat.) "You know, doubtless, what my wife is; it would be difficult, I should imagine, to find a more kind-hearted woman, you will agree. For her serving-maids, existence is simply a perfect paradise, and no mistake about it... But my wife

has made it a rule never to keep married serving-maids. Certainly it would not do; children come—and one thing and the other—and how is a serving-maid to look after her mistress as she ought, to fit in with her ways; she is no longer able to do it; her mind is in other things. One must take account of human nature. Well, we were driving once through our village, it must be—let me be correct—yes, fifteen years ago. We saw, at the bailiff's, a young girl, his daughter, very pretty indeed; something even—you know—something of the good servant in her manners. And my wife said to me: 'Kokó'—you understand, of course, that is her pet name for me—'let us take this girl to Petersburg; I like her, Kokó...' I said, 'Let us take her, by all means.' The bailiff, of course, fell plop at our feet; he could not have expected such good fortune, you can imagine... Well, the girl, of course, shed foolish tears. Of course, it was hard for her at first; the parental home... and that sort of thing... there was nothing surprising in that. However, she soon got used to us: at first we put her in the maidservants' room; they trained her, of course. And what do you think? The girl made wonderful progress; my wife became simply devoted to her, promoted her at last above the rest to wait on herself... observe... And one must do her the justice to say, my wife had never had such a maid, absolutely never; attentive, modest, and obedient—simply all that could be desired. My wife was very good to her; she even spoilt her, I must confess; she dressed her well, fed her from our own table, gave her tea to drink, and so on, as you can imagine! So she waited on my wife like this for ten years. Suddenly, one fine morning, picture to yourself, Arina—her name was Arina—walks unannounced into my study and flops down at my feet. That's a thing, I tell you plainly, I can't endure. No human being ought ever to lose sight of his personal dignity. Am I not right? 'What do you want?' 'Your honour, Alexander Silich, I beseech a favour of you.' 'What favour?' 'Let me be married.' I must confess I was taken aback. 'But you know, you fool, your mistress has no other lady's maid?' 'I will wait on Mistress as before.' 'Nonsense! Nonsense! Your mistress can't endure married serving-maids.' 'Malanya could take my place.' 'Don't argue with me.' 'Please...' I must confess it was quite a shock. I assure you, I am like that; nothing wounds me so—nothing, I venture to say, wounds me so deeply as ingratitude. I need not tell you—you know what my wife is: an angel upon earth, goodness incarnate. One would fancy even the worst of men would be ashamed to hurt her. Well, I sent Arina away. I thought, perhaps, she would come to her

senses; I was unwilling, do you know, to believe in wicked, black ingratitude in anyone. What do you think? Within six months she dared to come to me again with the same request. And here I must confess I turned her out in a temper and threatened to tell my wife about it. I was indignant. But imagine my amazement when, some time later, my wife comes to me in tears, so agitated that I felt positively alarmed. 'What has happened?' 'Arina'... You understand... I am ashamed to tell it. 'Impossible! Who is the man?' 'Petrushka, the footman.' My indignation broke out then. I am like that. I don't like half-measures! Petrushka—well, he wasn't to blame. We might flog him, but in my opinion he was not to blame. Arina... Well, well, well! What more's to be said? I gave orders, of course, that her hair should be cut off, she should be dressed in sackcloth, and sent back to the village. My wife was deprived of an excellent serving-maid; but there was no help for it: immorality cannot be tolerated in a household. Better to cut off the infected member at once. There, there! Now you can judge the thing for yourself — you know that my wife is... yes, yes, yes! indeed!... an angel! She had grown attached to Arina, and Arina knew it, and had the face to... Eh? no, tell me... eh? And what's the use of talking about it. Anyway, there was no help for it. I, indeed—I, in particular, felt hurt, felt wounded for a long time by the ingratitude of this girl. Whatever you say—it's no good to look for feeling, for heart, in these people! You may feed the wolf as you will; he will always hanker for the woods. It was a good lesson! But I only wanted to give you an example..."

And Mr. Zverkov, without finishing his sentence, turned away his head, and, wrapping himself more closely into his cloak, manfully repressed his involuntary emotion.

The reader now probably understands why I looked with sympathetic interest at Arina.

"Have you been married to the miller long?" I asked her at last.

"Two years."

"How was it? Did your master allow it?"

"They bought my freedom."

"Who?"

"Savely Alexeyevich."

"Who is that?"

"My husband." (Ermolai smiled to himself.) "Has my master perhaps spoken to you of me?" added Arina, after a brief silence.

I did not know what reply to make to her question.

"Arina!" cried the miller from a distance. She got up and walked away.

"Is her husband a good fellow?" I asked Ermolai.

"So-so."

"Have they any children?"

"There was one, but it died."

"How was it? Did the miller take a liking to her? Did he give much to buy her freedom?"

"I don't know. She can read and write; in their business it's of use. I suppose he liked her."

"And have you known her long?"

"Yes. I used to go to her master's. Their house isn't far from here."

"And do you know the footman Petrushka?"

"You mean Pyotr Vasilyevich? Of course, I knew him."

"Where is he now?"

"He was sent for a soldier."

We were silent for a while.

"She doesn't seem in good health?" I asked Ermolai at last.

"I should think not! Tomorrow, I say, we shall have good sport. A little sleep now would do us no harm."

A flock of wild ducks swept whizzing over our heads, and we heard them drop down into the river not far from us. It was now quite dark, and it began to be cold; in the thicket sounded the melodious notes of a nightingale. We buried ourselves in the hay and fell asleep.

RASPBERRY SPRING

At the beginning of August the heat often becomes insupportable. At that season, from twelve to three o'clock, the most determined and ardent sportsman is not able to hunt, and the most devoted dog begins to "clean his master's spurs", that is, to follow at his heels, his eyes painfully blinking, and his tongue hanging out to an exaggerated length; and in response to his master's reproaches he humbly wags his tail and shows confusion in his face; but he does not run forward. I happened to be out hunting on exactly such a day. I had long been fighting against the temptation to lie down somewhere in the shade, at least for a moment; for a long time my indefatigable dog went on running about in the bushes, though he clearly did not himself expect much good from his feverish activity. The stifling heat compelled me at last to begin to think of husbanding our energies and strength. I managed to reach the little river Ista, which is already known to my indulgent readers, descended the steep bank, and walked along the damp, yellow sand in the direction of the spring known to the whole neighbourhood as Raspberry Spring. This spring gushes out of a cleft in the bank, which has widened out into a small but deep ravine, and, twenty paces down, flows with a merry babbling sound into the river. Young oak covers the sloping wall of the ravine; the short velvety grass is green about the source: the sun's rays scarcely ever reach its cold, silvery water. I came as far as the spring; a cup of birch-wood lay on the grass, left by a passing peasant for the public benefit. I quenched my thirst, lay down in the shade, and looked round. In the cove, which had been formed by the flowing of the stream into the river, and hence marked for ever with the trace of ripples, two old men were sitting with their backs to me. One, a rather stout and tall man in a neat dark-green coat and lined cap, was fishing; the other was thin and little; he wore a patched fustian coat

and no cap; he held a little pot full of worms on his knees, and sometimes lifted his hand up to his grizzled little head, as though he wanted to protect it from the sun. I looked at him more attentively, and recognised in him Styopushka of Shumikhino. I must ask the reader's leave to present this man to him.

A few miles from my place there is a large village called Shumikhino, with a stone church, erected in the name of St. Kozma and St. Damian. Facing this church there had once stood a large and stately manor house, surrounded by various outhouses, servant's quarters, workshops, stables and coach-houses, baths and temporary kitchens, cottages for visitors and for bailiffs, conservatories, swings for the servants, and other more or less useful edifices. A family of rich landowners lived in this manor house, and all went well with them, till suddenly one morning all this prosperity was burnt to ashes. The owners removed to another home; the place was deserted. The huge blackened site was transformed into a kitchen-garden, cumbered up in parts by piles of bricks, the remains of the old foundations. A little hut had been clumsily put together out of the beams that had survived the fire; it was roofed with planking bought ten years before for the construction of a pavilion in the Gothic style; and the gardener Mitrofan, with his wife Axinia and their seven children, was installed in it. Mitrofan received orders to send greens and garden-stuff for the master's table, a hundred miles away; Axinia was put in charge of a Tyrolese cow, which had been bought for a high price in Moscow, but had remained barren and had, consequently, not given a drop of milk since its acquisition; a crested smoke-coloured drake, too, had been left in her care, the solitary "seignorial" bird; for the children, in consideration of their tender age, no special duties had been provided, a fact, however, which had not hindered them from growing up utterly lazy. I happened on two occasions to stay the night at this gardener's, and when I passed by I used to get cucumbers from him, which, for some unknown reason, were even in summer peculiar for their large size, their poor, watery flavour, and their thick yellow skin. It was there I first saw Stepushka. Except Mitrofan and his family, and the old deaf churchwarden Gerasim, kept out of charity in a little room at the one-eyed widow's, not one man among the house-serfs had remained at Shumikhino; for Stepushka, whom I intend to introduce to the reader, could not be classified under the special order of house-serfs, and hardly even under the genus "man".

Every man has some kind of position in society, and at least some ties of some sort; every house-serf receives, if not wages, at least some ration. Stepushka had absolutely no means of subsistence of any kind; had no relationship to anyone; no one knew of his existence. This man had not even a past; there was no story told of him; he had probably never been registered by a census. There were vague rumours that he had once belonged to someone as a valet; but who he was, where he came from, who was his father, and how he had come to be one of the Shumikhino people, in what way he had come by the fustian coat he had worn from immemorial times, where he lived and what he lived on—on all these questions no one had the least idea; and, to tell the truth, no one took any interest in the subject. Grandfather Trofimich, who knew the pedigrees of all the house-serfs in the direct line to the fourth generation, had once indeed been known to say that he remembered that Stepushka was related to a Turkish woman whom the late master, the brigadier Alexei Romanich, had been pleased to bring home from a campaign in the baggage-train. Even on holidays, days of general money-giving and of feasting on buckwheat dumplings and vodka, after the old Russian fashion—even on such days Stepushka did not put in an appearance at the trestle-tables nor at the barrels; he did not make his bow nor kiss the master's hand, nor toss off to the master's health and under the master's eye a glass filled by the fat hands of the bailiff. Some kind soul who passed by him might share an unfinished bit of dumpling with the poor beggar, perhaps. At Easter they said "Christ is risen!" to him; but he did not pull up his greasy sleeve and bring out of the depths of his pocket a coloured egg, to offer it, panting and blinking, to his young masters or to the mistress herself. He lived in summer in a little shed behind the chicken-house, and in winter in the ante-room of the bath-house; in the bitter frosts he spent the night in the hayloft. The house-serfs had grown used to seeing him; sometimes they gave him a kick, but no one ever addressed a remark to him; as for him, he seems never to have opened his lips from the time of his birth. After the fire, this forsaken creature sought a refuge at the gardener Mitrofan's. The gardener left him alone; he did not say "Live with me", but he did not drive him away either. And Stepushka did not live at the gardener's; his abode was the garden. He moved and walked about quite noiselessly; he sneezed and coughed behind his hand, not without apprehension; he was for ever busy and going stealthily to and fro like an ant; and all to get food—simply food to

eat. And indeed, if he had not worried from morning till night about his living, our poor friend would certainly have died of hunger. It's a sad lot not to know in the morning what you will find to eat before night! Sometimes Stepushka sits under the fence and gnaws a radish, or sucks a carrot, or shreds up some dirty head of cabbage; or he drags a bucket of water along, for some object or other, groaning with the effort; or he lights a fire under a small pot and throws in some little black scraps which he takes from out of the bosom of his coat; or he is hammering in his little wooden den—driving in a nail, putting up a shelf for bread. And all this he does silently, as though on the sly: before you can look round, he's in hiding again. Sometimes he suddenly disappears for a couple of days; but of course no one notices his absence . . . Then, lo and behold! He is there again, somewhere under the fence, stealthily kindling a fire of sticks under a kettle. He had a small face, yellowish eyes, hair coming down to his eyebrows, a sharp nose, large transparent ears, like a bat's, and a beard that looked as if it were a fortnight's growth, and never grew more nor less. This, then, was Stepushka, whom I met on the bank of the Ista in company with another old man.

I went up, wished them good day, and sat down beside them. Stepushka's companion, too, I recognised as an acquaintance; he was a freed serf of Count Pyotr Ilyich X., one Mikhailo Saveliev, nicknamed Tuman. He lived with a consumptive Bolkhov townsman, who kept an inn, where I had stayed several times. Young officials and other persons of leisure travelling on the Orel highroad (merchants, buried in their striped feather-beds, have other things to do) may still see at no great distance from the large village of Troitskoye, and almost on the highroad, an immense two-storied wooden house, completely deserted, with its roof fallen in and its windows boarded up. At midday in bright, sunny weather nothing can be imagined more melancholy than this ruin. Here once lived Count Pyotr Ilyich, a rich grandee of the olden time, renowned for his hospitality. At one time the whole gubernia used to meet at his house, to dance and make merry to their hearts' content to the deafening strains of a home-trained orchestra, and the popping of rockets and Roman candles; and doubtless more than one aged lady sighs as she drives by the deserted palace of the boyar and recalls the old days and her vanished youth. The count long continued to give balls and to walk about with an affable smile among the crowd of fawning guests; but his property, unluckily, was not enough to last his whole life. When he was entirely

ruined, he set off to St. Petersburg to try for a post for himself, and died in a room at a hotel, without having gained anything by his efforts. Tuman had been a butler of his, and had received his freedom already in the count's lifetime. He was a man of about seventy, with a regular and pleasant face. He was almost continually smiling, as only men of the time of Catherine ever do smile—a smile at once stately and indulgent; in speaking, he slowly opened and closed his lips, screwed up his eyes genially, and spoke slightly through his nose. He blew his nose and took snuff, too, in a leisurely fashion, as though he were doing something of no little importance.

"Well, Mikhailo Savelich," I began, "have you caught any fish?"

"Here, if you will deign to look in the basket: I have caught two perch and five roaches . . . Show them, Stepushka."

Stepushka stretched out the basket to me.

"How are you, Stepushka?" I asked him.

"Oh-oh-not-not-not so badly, your honour," answered Stepushka, stammering as though he had a heavy weight on his tongue.

"And is Mitrofan well?"

"Well—yes, yes—your honour."

The poor fellow turned away.

"But there are not many bites," remarked Tuman. "It's so fearfully not; the fish are all tired out under the bushes; they're asleep. Put on a worm, Stepushka." (Stepushka took out a worm, laid it on his open hand, struck it two or three times, put it on the hook, spat on it, and gave it to Tuman.) "Thanks, Stepushka . . . And you, your honour," he continued, turning to me, "are pleased to be out hunting?"

"As you see."

"Ah—and is your dog there English or German?"

The old man liked to show off on occasion, as though he would say, "I, too, have lived in the world!"

"I don't know what breed it is, but it's a good dog."

"Ah! And do you ride with the hounds too?"

"Yes, I have two leashes of hounds."

Tuman smiled and shook his head.

"That's just it; one man is devoted to dogs, and another doesn't want them for anything. According to my simple notions, I fancy dogs should be kept rather for appearance's sake . . . and all should be in style, too; horses, too, should be in style, and huntsmen in style, as they ought to be, and all. The late count—God's grace be with

him!—was never, I must own, much of a hunter; but he kept hounds, and twice a year he was pleased to ride with them. The huntsmen assembled in the courtyard, in red kaftans trimmed with galloon, and blew their horns; His Excellency would be pleased to come out, and His Excellency's horse would be led up; His Excellency would mount, and the chief huntsman puts his feet in the stirrups, takes his hat off, and puts the reins in his hat to offer them to His Excellency. His Excellency is pleased to click his whip like this, and the huntsmen give a shout, and off they go out of the gate away. A huntsman rides behind the count, and holds in a silken leash two of the master's favourite dogs, and looks after them well, you may fancy... And he, too, this huntsman, sits up high, on a Cossack saddle; such a red-cheeked fellow he was, and rolled his eyes like this... And there were guests too, you may be sure, on such occasions, and entertainment, and ceremonies observed... Ah, he's got away, the rascal?" he interrupted himself suddenly, drawing in his line.

"They say the count used to live pretty freely in his day?" I asked.

The old man spat on the worm and cast the line again.

"He was a great gentleman, as is well known. Persons of the first rank, one may say, at St. Petersburg, used to visit him. With blue ribbons on their breasts they used to sit down to table and eat. Well, he knew how to entertain them. He called me sometimes. 'Tuman,' says he, 'I want by tomorrow some live sterlet; see there are some, do you hear?' 'Yes, Your Excellency.' Embroidered coats, wigs, canes, perfumes, eau-de-Cologne of the best sort, snuff-boxes, huge pictures: he would order them all the way from Paris! When he gave a banquet, God Almighty, there were fireworks, and troikas! They even fired off the cannon. The orchestra alone consisted of forty men. He kept a German as conductor of the band, but the German gave himself dreadful airs; he wanted to eat at the same table as the masters; so His Excellency gave orders to get rid of him! 'My musicians,' says he, 'can do their work even without a conductor.' Of course he was master. Then they would dance till morning, especially at the *écossaise matradur*... Ah-ah—got you!" (The old man drew a small perch out of the water.) "Here you are, Stepushka! The master was all a master should be," continued the old man, casting his line in again, "and he had a kind heart, too. He would hit you at times, and before you could look round, he's forgotten it already.

There was only one thing: he kept mistresses. Ugh, those mistresses! The plague on them! They were the ruin of him. And yet, you know, he took them most generally from a low station. You would fancy they would not want much? Not a bit—they must have everything of the most expensive in all Europe! One may say, 'Why shouldn't he live as he likes; it's the master's business' . . . but there was no need to ruin himself. There was one especially; Akulina was her name. She is dead now; God rest her soul! She was a simple wench, the daughter of the constable at Sitovo; and such a vixen! She would slap the count's face sometimes. She simply bewitched him. My nephew she sent for a soldier; he spilt some chocolate on a new dress of hers . . . and he wasn't the only one she served so. Ah, well, those were good times, though!" added the old man with a deep sigh. His head drooped forward and he was silent.

"Your master, I see, was strict, then?" I began after a brief silence.

"That was the fashion then, your honour," he replied, shaking his head.

"That sort of thing is not done now," I observed, not taking my eyes off him.

He gave me a look askance.

"Now, surely, it's better," he muttered, and let out his line further.

We were sitting in the shade; but even in the shade it was stifling hot. The sultry atmosphere was faint and heavy; one's burning face sought a breath of wind longingly, but there was no wind. The sun beat down from blue and darkening skies; right opposite us, on the other bank, was a yellow field of oats, overgrown here and there with wormwood; not one ear of the oats quivered. A little lower down a peasant's horse stood in the river up to its knees and slowly swung its wet tail; from time to time, under an overhanging bush, a large fish floated up, bringing bubbles to the surface, and gently sank down to the bottom, leaving a slight ripple behind it. The grasshoppers chirped in the scorched grass; the quail's cry sounded languid and reluctant; hawks sailed smoothly over the meadows, often halting in the same spot, rapidly fluttering their wings and opening their tails into a fan. We sat motionless, overpowered with the heat. Suddenly there was a sound behind us in the ravine; someone was coming down to the spring. I looked round and saw a peasant of about fifty, covered with dust, in a smock, and wearing bast shoes; he carried a wicker-

work pannier and a coat on his shoulders. He went down to the spring, drank thirstily, and got up.

"Ah, Vlas!" cried Tuman, staring at him; "good day to you, friend! Where has God sent you from?"

"Good day to you, Mikhailo Savelich!" said the peasant, coming nearer to us. "From a long way off."

"Where have you been?" Tuman asked him.

"I have been to Moscow, to my master."

"What for?"

"I went to ask him a favour."

"What about?"

"Oh, to lessen my rent, or to let me work it out in labour, or to put me on another piece of land, or something. My son is dead—so I can't manage it now alone."

"Your son is dead?"

"He is dead. My son," added the peasant, after a pause, "lived in Moscow as a cabman; he paid, I must confess, my rent for me."

"Why, are you paying rent now?"

"Yes, we pay rent."

"What did your master say?"

"What did the master say! He drove me away! Says he, 'How dare you come straight to me; there is a bailiff for such things. You ought first,' says he, 'to apply to the bailiff . . . and where am I to put you on other land? First,' says he, 'pay the debt you owe me.' He was that angry."

"What then—did you come back?"

"I came back. I wanted to find out if my son had not left any goods of his own, but I couldn't get a straight answer. I say to his employer, 'I am Philip's father'; and he says, 'What do I know about that? And your son,' says he, 'left nothing; he was even in debt to me.' So I came away."

The peasant related all this with a smile, as though he were speaking of someone else; but tears were starting into his small, screwed-up eyes, and his lips were quivering.

"Well, are you going home then now?"

"Where else can I go? Of course I'm going home. My wife, I suppose, is pretty well starved by now."

"You should, then..." Stepushka said suddenly. He grew confused at once, was silent, and began to rummage in the worm-pot.

"And shall you go to the bailiff?" continued Tuman, looking with some amazement at Stepushka.

"What should I go to him for?—I'm in arrears as it is. My son was ill for a year before his death; he could not pay even his own rent. But it can't hurt me; they can get nothing from me . . . Try as they might, they'll get nowhere—I'm cleaned out!" (The peasant laughed.) "Kintilyan Semyonich'll have to be clever to—"

Vlas laughed again.

"Oh! Things are in a sad way, brother Vlas," Tuman ejaculated deliberately.

"Sad! No!" (Vlas's voice broke.) "How hot it is!" he went on, wiping his face with his sleeve.

"Who is your master?" I asked him.

"Count Valerian Petrovich X."

"The son of Pyotr Ilyich?"

"The son of Pyotr Ilyich," replied Tuman. "Pyotr Ilyich gave him Vlas's village in his lifetime."

"Is he well?"

"He is well, thank God!" replied Vlas. "He has grown so red, and his face looks as though it were padded."

"You see, your honour," continued Tuman, turning to me, "it would be all right near Moscow, but it's a different matter to pay rent here."

"And what is the rent for you altogether?"

"Ninety-five rubles," muttered Vlas.

"There, you see; and it's the least bit of land; all there is is the master's forest."

"And that, they say, they have sold," observed the peasant.

"There, you see. Stepushka, give me a worm. Why, Stepushka, are you asleep—eh?"

Stepushka started. The peasant sat down by us. We sank into silence again. On the other bank someone was singing a song—but such a mournful one. Our poor Vlas grew deeply dejected.

Half an hour later we parted.

THE COUNTRY DOCTOR

One day in autumn on my way back from a remote district I caught cold and fell ill. Fortunately the fever attacked me in town at the inn; I sent for the doctor. In half an hour the local doctor appeared, a thin, dark-haired man of middle height. He prescribed me the usual sudorific, ordered a mustard-plaster to be put on, very deftly slid a five-ruble note down the cuff of his sleeve, coughing drily and looking away as he did so, and then was getting up to go home, but somehow fell into talk and remained. I was exhausted with feverishness; I foresaw a sleepless night, and was glad of a little chat with a pleasant companion. Tea was served. My doctor began to converse freely. He was a sensible fellow, and expressed himself with vigour and some humour. Queer things happen in the world: you may live a long while with some people, and be on friendly terms with them, and never once speak frankly with them; with others you have scarcely time to get acquainted, and all at once you are pouring out to him—or he to you—all your secrets, as though you were at confession. I don't know how I gained the confidence of my new friend—anyway, with nothing to lead up to it, he told me a rather curious incident; and here I will report his tale for the information of the indulgent reader. I will try to tell it in the doctor's own words.

"You don't happen to know," he began in a weak and quavering voice (the common result of the use of unmixed Berezov snuff), "you don't happen to know the judge here, Milov, Pavel Lukich? You don't know him? Well, no matter." (He cleared his throat and rubbed his eyes.) "Well, you see, the thing happened, to tell you exactly without mistake, in Lent, at the very time of the thaws. I was sitting at his house—our judge's, you know—playing preference. Our judge is a good fellow, and fond of playing preference. Suddenly" (the doctor

made frequent use of this word) "they tell me, 'There's a servant asking for you.' I say, 'What does he want?' They say, 'He has brought a note—it must be from a patient.' 'Give me the note,' I say. So it is from a patient—well and good—you understand—it's our bread and butter . . . But this is how it was: a lady, a widow, writes to me; she says, 'My daughter is dying. Come, for God's sake!' she says. 'And the horses have been sent for you.' . . . Well, that's all right. But she lived twenty versts from the town, and it was midnight out of doors, and the roads in such a state, my word! And as she was poor herself, one could not expect more than two rubles, and even that problematic; and perhaps it might only be a matter of a roll of linen and some groats in payment. However, duty, you know, before everything: a fellow-creature may be dying. I hand over my cards at once to Kalliopin, the member of the provincial commission, and return home. I look; a wretched little trap was standing at the steps, with peasant's horses, with big bellies,—and their coats as shaggy as felt; and the coachman sitting with his cap off out of respect. Well, I think to myself, 'It's clear, my friend, these patients aren't eating off gold plate.' . . . You smile; but I tell you, a poor man like me has to take everything into consideration . . . If the coachman sits like a prince, and doesn't touch his cap, and even sneers at you behind his beard, and flicks his whip—then you may bet on six rubles. But here, I saw, it was a very different proposition. However, I think there's no help for it; duty before everything. I snatch up the most necessary drugs, and set off. Will you believe it? I only just managed to get there at all. The road was infernal; streams, snow, mud, and the dyke had burst there—it was terrible! However, I arrived at last. It was a little thatched house. There was a light in the windows; that meant they expected me. I was met by an old lady, very venerable, in a cap. 'Save her!' she says. 'She is dying.' I say, 'Pray don't distress yourself. Where is the invalid?' 'Come this way.' I see a clean little room, an icon-lamp in the corner; on the bed a girl of twenty or so, unconscious. She was burning hot, and breathing heavily—it was fever. There were other girls, her sisters, scared and in tears. 'Yesterday,' they tell me, 'she was perfectly well and had a good appetite; this morning she complained of headache, and this evening, suddenly, you see, like this.' I say again, 'Pray don't be uneasy.' It's a doctor's job, you know—and I started on her. I bled her, told them to put on a mustard-plaster, and prescribed a mixture. Meantime I looked at her; I looked at her, you know—there, by God! I had never seen such

a face!—She^a was a beauty, in a word! I felt quite shaken with pity. Such lovely features; such eyes!... But, thank God! She became easier; she fell into a perspiration, seemed to come to her senses, looked round, smiled, and passed her hand over her face... Her sisters bent over her. They ask, 'How are you?' 'All right,' she says, and turns away. Soon she fell asleep. 'Well,' I say, 'now the patient should be left alone.' So we all went out on tiptoe; only a maid remained, in case she was wanted. In the parlour there was a samovar standing on the table, and a bottle of rum; in our profession one can't get on without it. They gave me tea; asked me to stop the night... I consented: where could I go, indeed, at that time of night? The old lady was still upset. 'Don't worry,' I say, 'she will live; you had better take a little rest yourself; it is about two o'clock.' 'But will you send to wake me if anything happens?' 'Yes, yes.' The old lady went away, and the girls, too, went to their own room; they made up a bed for me in the parlour. Well, I went to bed—but I could not get to sleep, for a wonder! For in reality I was very tired. I could not get my patient out of my head. At last I could not stand with it any longer! I got up suddenly; I think to myself, 'I will go and see how the patient is getting on.' Her bedroom was next to the parlour. Well, I got up and gently opened the door—how my heart beat! I looked in: the servant was asleep, her mouth wide open, and even snoring, the wretch! But the patient lay with her face towards me, and her arms flung wide apart, poor girl! I went up to her... when suddenly she opened her eyes and stared at me! 'Who is it? Who is it?' I was in confusion. 'Don't be alarmed, mademoiselle,' I say, 'I am the doctor; I have come to see how you feel.' 'You the doctor?' 'Yes, the doctor; your mother sent for me to the town; we have bled you, mademoiselle; now pray go to sleep, and in a day or two, please God! we will set you on your feet again.' 'Ah, yes, yes, doctor, don't let me die... please, please.' 'Why do you talk like that? God bless you!' She is in a fever again, I think to myself; I felt her pulse; yes, she was feverish. She looked at me, and then suddenly took me by the hand. 'I will tell you why I don't want to die; I will tell you... Now we are alone; and only please don't you tell anybody... not anyone... Listen...' I bent down; she moved her lips quite to my ear so that her hair touched my cheek—I confess my head went round—and began to whisper... I could make out nothing of it... Ah, she was delirious!... She whispered and whispered, but so quickly, and it did not sound Russian; at last she finished, and shivering dropped her head on the

pillow, and threatened me with her finger, 'Remember, doctor, not anyone.' I calmed her somehow, gave her something to drink, waked the servant, and went away."

At this point the doctor again took snuff with exasperated energy, and for a moment was silent and motionless.

"However," he continued, "the next day, contrary to my expectations, the patient was no better. I thought a while, and suddenly decided to remain there, even though my other patients were expecting me . . . And you know one can't afford to neglect that; one's practice suffers if one does. But, in the first place, the patient was really in danger; and secondly, to tell the truth, I felt strongly drawn to her. Besides, I liked the whole family. Though they were really badly off, they were singularly, I may say, cultivated people . . . Their father had been a learned man, an author; he died, of course, in poverty, but he had managed before he died to give his children an excellent education; he left a lot of books too. Either because I looked after the invalid very carefully, or for some other reason; anyway, I can venture to say all the household came to love me as if I were one of the family. Meantime the roads became worse than ever; all communications, so to say, were cut off completely; even medicine could only be got from the town with difficulty. The sick girl was not getting better. Day after day, and day after day . . . but . . . then . . ." (The doctor made a brief pause.) "I declare I don't know how to tell you . . ." (He again took snuff, coughed, and swallowed a little tea.) "I will tell you without beating about the bush. My patient . . . how should I say? . . . Well, she had fallen in love with me . . . or, no, it was not that she was in love . . . however . . . really, how should one say?" (The doctor looked down and grew red.) "No," he went on quickly. "In love, indeed! A man should not overestimate himself. She was an educated girl, clever and well-read, and I had even forgotten my Latin, one may say, completely. As to appearance" (the doctor looked himself over with a smile), "I am nothing to boast of there either. But God Almighty did not make me a fool; I don't take black for white; I know a thing or two. I could see very clearly, for instance, that Alexandra Andreyevna—that was her name—did not feel love for me, but had a friendly, so to say, inclination—a respect or something for me. Though she herself perhaps mistook this sentiment, but then in her condition, judge for yourself . . . But," added the doctor, who had brought out all these disconnected sentences without taking breath, and with obvious embarrassment, "I seem to be wandering

rather—you won't understand anything like this . . . There, with your leave, I will relate it all in order."

He drank off a glass of tea and began in a calmer voice.

"Well, then. My patient kept getting worse and worse. You are not a doctor, my good sir; you cannot understand what passes in a doctor's heart, especially at first, when he begins to suspect that the disease is getting the upper hand of him. What becomes of his belief in himself? You suddenly grow so timid. You fancy that you have forgotten everything you knew, and that the patient has no faith in you, and that other people begin to notice how lost you are, and tell you the symptoms with reluctance; that they are looking at you suspiciously, and whisper among themselves . . . Ah! it's horrid! There must be a remedy, you think, for this disease, if one could only find it. Isn't this it? You try—no, that's not it! You don't allow the medicine the necessary time to do good . . . You clutch at one thing, then at another. Sometimes you take up a book of medical prescriptions—it must be here, you think! Sometimes, by Jove, you pick one out by chance, thinking to leave it to fate . . . But meantime a fellow-creature's dying, and another doctor might have saved him. 'We must have a consultation,' you say; 'I will not take the responsibility on myself.' And what a fool you look at such times! Well, in time you learn to bear it. A human being has died—but it's not your fault; you treated him by the rules. But what's still more torture to you is to see blind faith in you, and to feel yourself that you are not able to do anything. Well, it was just this blind faith that the whole of Alexandra Andreyevna's family had in me; they had forgotten to think that their daughter was in danger. I, too, for my part, assured them that it was nothing, but meantime my heart sank into my boots. To add to our troubles, the roads were in such a state that the coachman was gone for whole days on end to get medicine. And I never left the patient's room; I could not tear myself away; I told her amusing stories, you know, and played cards with her. I watched by her side at night. The old mother thanked me with tears in her eyes; but I thought to myself, 'I don't deserve your gratitude.' I frankly confess to you—there is no object in concealing it now—I was in love with my patient. And Alexandra Andreyevna had grown fond of me; she would not sometimes let anyone be in her room but me. She talked to me, asked me questions: where I had studied, how I lived, who were my people, whom I went to see. I felt that she ought not to talk; but to forbid her to—to forbid her resolutely, you know—I

could not. Sometimes I held my head in my hands, and asked myself, 'What are you doing, you brute?' And she would take my hand and hold it, give me a long, long look, and turn away, sigh, and say, 'How good you are!' Her hands were so hot, her eyes so large and languid. 'Yes,' she said, 'you are a good, kind man; you are not like our neighbours. No, you are not like that. Why did I not know you till now!' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, calm yourself,' I said. 'Believe me, I am grateful, I don't know how I have deserved . . . but there, calm yourself. All will be right; you will be well again.' And meanwhile I must tell you," continued the doctor, bending forward and raising his eyebrows, "that they associated very little with the neighbours, because the smaller people were not on their level, and pride prevented them from making up to the rich. I tell you, they were an exceptionally cultivated family; so you know it was gratifying for me. She would only take her medicine from my hands. She would lift herself up, poor girl, with my aid, take it, and gaze at me . . . My heart felt as if it were bursting. And meanwhile she was growing worse and worse, worse and worse, all the time. She will die, I think to myself; she is sure to die. Believe me, I would sooner have gone to the grave myself; and here were her mother and sisters watching me, looking into my eyes . . . and their faith in me was wearing away. 'Well? How is she?' 'Oh, all right, all right!' All right, indeed! My mind was failing me. Well, I was sitting one night again by my patient. The maid was sitting there too and snoring away for all she was worth; I can't find fault with the poor girl, though; she was worn out, too. Alexandra Andreyevna had felt very unwell all the evening; she was very feverish. Until midnight she kept tossing about; at last she seemed to fall asleep; at least, she lay still without stirring. The lamp was burning in the corner before the holy image. I sat there, you know, with my head bent; I even dozed a little. Suddenly it seemed as though someone poked me in the side; I turned round . . . Good God! Alexandra Andreyevna was gazing with intent eyes at me . . . her lips parted, her cheeks flushed. 'What is it?' 'Doctor, shall I die?' 'Merciful Heavens!' 'No, doctor, no; please don't tell me I shall live . . . don't say so . . . If you knew . . . Listen! For God's sake don't conceal my real position,' and her breath came so fast. 'If I can know for certain that I must die . . . then I will tell you all—all!' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, I beg you!' 'Listen; I have not been asleep at all. I have been looking at you a long while. For God's sake! . . . I believe in you; you are a good man, an honest man; I entreat you by all that is sacred in the world—

tell me the truth! If you knew how important it is for me . . . Doctor, for God's sake tell me . . . Am I in danger?' 'What can I tell you, Alexandra Andreyevna, pray?' 'For God's sake, I beseech you!' 'I can't deny from you,' I say, 'Alexandra Andreyevna; you are certainly in danger; but God is merciful.' 'I shall die, I shall die.' And it seemed as though she were pleased; her face grew so bright; I was alarmed. 'Don't be afraid, don't be afraid! I am not frightened of death at all.' She suddenly raised herself and leaned on her elbow. 'Now . . . yes, now I can tell you that I thank you with my whole heart . . . that you are kind and good—that I love you!' I stared at her, in terror, my flesh crept, you know. 'Do you hear, I love you!' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, how have I deserved—' 'No, no, you don't—you don't understand me!' And suddenly she stretched out her arms, and taking my head in her hands, she kissed it. Believe me, I almost screamed aloud. I threw myself on my knees, and buried my head in the pillow. She did not speak; her fingers trembled in my hair; I heard her weep. I began to soothe her, to assure her . . . I really don't know what I did say to her. 'You will wake up the girl,' I said to her. 'Alexandra Andreyevna, I thank you . . . believe me . . . calm yourself.' 'Enough, enough!' she persisted; 'never mind all of them; let them wake, then; let them come in—it does not matter; I am dying, you see . . . And what do you fear? Why are you afraid? Lift up your head. Or, perhaps, you don't love me; perhaps I misunderstood. In that case, forgive me.' 'Alexandra Andreyevna, what are you saying! I love you, Alexandra Andreyevna.' She looked straight into my eyes and opened her arms wide. 'Then take me in your arms.' I tell you frankly, I don't know how it was I did not go mad that night. I knew that my patient was killing herself; I saw that she was not fully herself; I understood, too, that if she did not consider herself on the point of death, she would never have thought of me; and, indeed, say what you will, it's hard to die at twenty without having known love; this was what was torturing her; this was why, in despair, she clutched at me—do you understand now? But she held me in her arms and would not let me go. 'Have pity on me, Alexandra Andreyevna, and have pity on yourself,' I say. 'Why,' she says, 'what is there to pity? You know I must die.' This she repeated incessantly. 'If I knew that I should return to life, and be a proper young lady again, I should be ashamed . . . of course, ashamed . . . but why now?' 'But who said you will die?' 'Oh, no, leave off! You will not deceive me; you don't know how to lie—look at your face.' 'You shall live, Alexandra Andreyevna;

I will cure you; we will ask your mother's blessing... we will be united—we will be happy.' 'No, no, I have your word; I must die... you have promised me... you have told me.' I was hurt cruelly—hurt for many reasons. Small things can hurt you terribly sometimes; it seems nothing at all, but it's painful. It occurred to her to ask me what my name was; not my surname, but my first name. I must needs be so unlucky as to be called Trifon. Yes, indeed! Trifon Ivanich. Every one in the house called me doctor. However, there was no help for it. I said, 'Trifon, mademoiselle.' She frowned, shook her head, and muttered something in French—ah, something unpleasant, of course!—and then she laughed—disagreeably, too. Well, I spent the whole night with her in this way. Before morning I went away, almost out of my mind. When I went again into her room it was daytime, after morning tea. Good God! I could scarcely recognise her; people are laid in their grave looking better than that. I swear to you, on my honour, I don't understand—I absolutely don't understand—now, how I lived through that torture. Three days and nights my patient lingered on. And what nights! What things she said to me! And on the last night—only imagine to yourself—I was sitting near her and kept praying to God for one thing only: 'Take her,' I said, 'quickly, and me with her.' Suddenly the old mother comes into the room. I had already the evening before told her—the mother—there was little hope, and it would be well to send for a priest. When the sick girl saw her mother she said, 'It's very well you have come; look at us, we love one another—we have given each other our word.' 'What does she say, doctor? What does she say?' I turned cold. 'She is wandering,' I say, 'the fever.' But she: 'Hush, hush; you told me something quite different just now, and have taken my ring. Why do you pretend? My mother is good—she will forgive—she will understand—and I am dying. I have no need to tell lies; give me your hand.' I jumped up and ran out of the room. The old lady, of course, guessed how it was.

"I will not, however, weary you any longer, and to me, too, of course, it's painful to recall all this. My patient passed away the next day. God rest her soul!" the doctor added, speaking quickly and with a sigh. Before her death she asked her family to go out and leave me alone with her.

"'Forgive me,' she said, 'I am perhaps at fault... my illness... but believe me, I have loved no one more than you... do not forget me... keep my ring.'"

The doctor turned away; I took his hand.

"Ah!" he said. "Let us talk of something else, or would you care to play preference for a small stake? It is not for people like me to give way to exalted emotions. There's only one thing for the likes of us to think of how to keep the children from crying and the wife from scolding. Since then, you know, I have had time to enter into lawful wedlock, as they say. Yes; I took a merchant's daughter—seven thousand for her dowry. Her name's Akulina; it goes well with Trifon. She is an ill-tempered woman, I must tell you, but luckily she's asleep all day . . . Well, shall it be preference?"

We sat down to preference for kopek points. Trifon Ivanich won two rubles and a half from me and went home late, well pleased with his success.

MY NEIGHBOUR RADILOV

For the autumn, woodcocks often take refuge in old orchards of lime-trees. There are a good many such orchards among us, in Orel Gubernia. Our forefathers, when they selected a place for habitation, invariably marked out two acres of good ground for an orchard, with avenues of lime-trees. Within the last fifty, or seventy years at most, these mansions—"noblemen's nests", as they call them—have gradually disappeared off the face of the earth; the houses have fallen to pieces, or have been sold for the building materials; the stone out-houses have become piles of rubble; the apple-trees have been used for fire-wood, the fences have been pulled down. Only the lime-trees grow in all their glory as before, and with ploughed fields all round them, tell a tale to this light-hearted generation of "our fathers and brothers who have lived before us".

A magnificent tree is such an old lime-tree. Even the merciless axe of the Russian peasant spares it. Its leaves are small, its powerful limbs spread wide in all directions; there is perpetual shade under them.

Once, as I was wandering about the fields after partridges with Ermolai, I saw some way off a deserted orchard, and turned towards it. I had hardly crossed its borders when a snipe rose up out of a bush with a clatter. I fired my gun, and at the same instant, a few paces from me, I heard a shriek; the frightened face of a young girl peeped out for a second from behind the trees, and instantly disappeared. Ermolai ran up to me. "Why are you shooting here? There is a landlord living here."

Before I had time to answer him, before my dog had had time to bring me, with dignified importance, the bird I had shot, swift footsteps were heard, and a tall man with moustaches came out of the thicket and stopped, with an air of displeasure, before me. I made

my apologies as best I could, gave him my name, and offered him the bird that had been killed on his domain.

"Very well," he said to me with a smile, "I will take your game, but only on one condition: that you will stay and dine with us."

I must confess I was not greatly delighted at his proposition, but it was impossible to refuse.

"I am a landowner here, and your neighbour, Radilov; perhaps you have heard of me?" continued my new acquaintance. "Today is Sunday, and we shall be sure to have a decent dinner, otherwise I would not have invited you."

I made such a reply as one does make in such circumstances, and turned to follow him. A little path that had lately been cleared soon led us out of the grove of lime-trees; we came into the kitchen-garden. Between old apple-trees and thick gooseberry bushes were rows of curly whitish-green cabbages; the hop twined its tendrils round high poles; there were thick ranks of brown twigs tangled over with dried peas; large flat pumpkins seemed rolling on the ground; cucumbers showed yellow under their dusty angular leaves; tall nettles were waving along the fence; in two or three places grew clumps of Tatar honeysuckle, elder, and wild rose—the remnants of former flower-beds. Near a small fish-pond, full of reddish and slimy water, we saw the well, surrounded by puddles. Ducks were busily splashing and waddling about these puddles; a dog blinking and twitching in every limb was gnawing a bone in a grassy patch, where a piebald cow was lazily grazing, from time to time flicking its tail over its lean back. The little path turned to one side; from behind thick willows and birches we caught sight of a little grey old house, with a boarded roof and a winding flight of steps. Radilov stopped short.

"But," he said, with a good-humoured and direct look in my face, "on second thought . . . perhaps you don't care to come and visit with me, after all. In that case—"

I did not allow him to finish, but assured him that, on the contrary, it would be a great pleasure to me to dine with him.

"Well, you know best."

We went into the house. A young man in a long coat of stout blue cloth met us on the steps. Radilov at once told him to bring Ermolai some vodka; my huntsman made a respectful bow to the back of the munificent host. From the hall, which was decorated with various parti-coloured pictures and hung up with bird cages, we went into a small room—Radilov's study. I took off my hunting accoutrements,

and put my gun in a corner; the young man in the long-skirted coat busily brushed me down.

"Well, now let us go into the drawing-room," said Radilov cordially. "I will introduce you to my mother."

I walked after him. In the drawing-room, on the sofa, was sitting an old lady of medium height, in a cinnamon-coloured dress and a white cap, with a thin, kind old face, and a timid, mournful expression.

"Here, mother, let me introduce to you our neighbour..."

The old lady rose a little and made me a bow, not letting go out of her withered hands a fat worsted reticule that looked like a sack.

"Have you been long in our neighbourhood?" she asked in a weak and gentle voice, blinking her eyes.

"No, not long."

"Do you intend to remain here long?"

"Till the winter, I think."

The old lady said no more.

"And here," interposed Radilov, indicating to me a tall and thin man, whom I had not noticed on entering the drawing-room, "is Fyodor Mikheich... Come, Fyodor, give the visitor a specimen of your art. Why have you hidden yourself away in that corner?"

Fyodor Mikheich got up at once from his chair, fetched a wretched little fiddle from the window, took the bow—not by the end, as is usual, but by the middle—put the fiddle to his chest, shut his eyes, and fell to dancing, singing a song, and scraping on the strings. He looked about seventy; a thin nankeen overcoat flapped pathetically about his dry and bony limbs. He danced, at times shaking boldly his little bald head, and then, moving it slowly right and left, his scraggy neck stretched out, stamping his feet on the ground, and sometimes bending his knees with obvious difficulty. A voice cracked with age came from his toothless mouth.

Radilov must have guessed from the expression of my face that Fyodor's "art" did not give me much pleasure.

"Very good, old man, that's enough," he said. "You can go and reward yourself."

Fyodor Mikheich at once laid down the fiddle on the window-sill, bowed first to me as the guest, then to the old lady, then to Radilov, and went away.

"He was a landowner," my new friend continued, "and a rich one, too, but he ruined himself—so he lives now with me. But in his day

he was considered the most dashing fellow in the gubernia; he eloped with two married ladies; he used to keep singers, and sang himself, and danced dashingly... But won't you take some vodka? Dinner is just ready."

A young girl, the same that I had caught a glimpse of in the orchard, came into the room.

"And here is Olga!" observed Radilov, slightly turning his head. "Let me present you... Well, let us go in to dinner."

We went in and sat down to the table. While we were coming out of the drawing-room and taking our seats, Fyodor Mikheich, whose eyes were bright and nose rather red after his "reward", sang *Raise the Cry of Victory*. They laid a separate cover for him in a corner on a little table without a table-napkin. The poor old man could not boast of very nice table manners, and so they always kept him at some distance from society. He crossed himself, sighed, and began to eat like a shark. The dinner was in reality not bad, and in honour of Sunday was accompanied, of course, with shaking jelly and Spanish puffs of pastry. At the table Radilov, who had served ten years in an infantry regiment and had been in Turkey, fell to telling anecdotes; I listened to him with attention, and secretly watched Olga. She was not very pretty; but the tranquil and resolute expression of her face, her broad, white brow, her thick hair, and especially her brown eyes—not large, but clear, sensible and lively—would have made an impression on anyone in my place. She seemed to be following every word Radilov uttered—not so much sympathy as passionate attention was expressed on her face. Radilov in years might have been her father; he called her by her Christian name, but I guessed at once that she was not his daughter. In the course of conversation he referred to his deceased wife—"her sister", he added, indicating Olga. She blushed quickly and dropped her eyes. Radilov paused a moment and then changed the subject. The old lady did not utter a word during the whole of dinner; she ate scarcely anything herself, and did not press me to partake. Her features had an air of timorous and hopeless expectation, that melancholy of old age which it pierces one's heart to look upon. At the end of dinner Fyodor Mikheich made to "celebrate" the hosts and guests but Radilov looked at me and asked him to be quiet; the old man passed his hand over his lips, began to blink, bowed, and sat down again, but only on the very edge of his chair. After dinner I returned with Radilov to his study.

In people who are constantly and intensely preoccupied with one

idea, or one emotion, there is something in common, a kind of external resemblance in manner, however different may be their qualities, their abilities, their position in society, and their education. The more I watched Radilov, the more I felt that he belonged to this class of people. He talked of husbandry, of the crops, of war, of the gossip of the uyezd and the approaching elections; he talked without constraint, and even with interest; but suddenly he would sigh and drop into a chair, and pass his hand over his face, like a man wearied out by a tedious task. His whole nature—a good and warm-hearted one, too—seemed saturated through, steeped in some one feeling. I was amazed to be unable to discover in him either a passion for eating, or for wine, or for sport, or for Kursk nightingales, or for epileptic pigeons, or for Russian literature, or for trotting-hacks, or for Hungarian coats, or for cards, or for billiards, or for dances, or for trips to the gubernia town or the capital, or for paper mills and beet-sugar refineries, or for painted pavilions, or for tea, or for trace-horses trained to hold their heads askew, or even for fat coachmen belted under their very armpits—those magnificent coachmen whose eyes, for some mysterious reason, seem rolling and starting out of their heads at every movement . . . “What sort of landlord is this, then?” I thought. At the same time he did not in the least pose as a gloomy man discontented with his destiny; on the contrary, he seemed full of indiscriminating good-will, cordial and almost vexatious readiness to become intimate with every one he came across. In reality you felt at the same time, that he could not be friends, nor be really intimate with anyone, and not because in general he was independent of other people, but because his whole being was for a time turned inwards upon himself. Looking at Radilov, I could never imagine him happy either now or at any time. Nor was he handsome; but in his eyes, his smile, his whole being, there was hidden something extremely attractive—yes, hidden. So that you felt you would like to know him better, to get to love him. Of course, at times the landlord and the man of the steppes peeped out in him; but all the same he was a capital fellow.

We were beginning to talk about the new marshal of the uyezd, when suddenly we heard Olga's voice at the door: “Tea is ready.” We went into the drawing-room. Fyodor Mikheich was sitting as before in his corner between the little window and the door, his legs curled up under him. Radilov's mother was knitting a stocking. From the opened windows came a breath of autumn freshness and the scent

of apples. Olga was busy pouring out tea. I looked at her now with more attention than at dinner. Like most provincial girls, she spoke very little, but at any rate I did not notice in her any of their anxiety to say something fine, together with their painful consciousness of stupidity and helplessness; she did not sigh as though from the burden of unutterable emotions, nor cast up her eyes, nor smile vaguely and dreamily. Her look expressed tranquil self-possession, as if she were taking breath after great happiness or great worry. Her carriage and her movements were resolute and free. I liked her very much.

I fell again into conversation with Radilov. I don't recollect what brought us to the familiar observation that often the most insignificant things produce more effect on people than the most important.

"Yes," Radilov agreed, "I have experienced that in my own case. I, as you know, have been married. It was not for long—three years; my wife died in child-birth. I thought that I should not survive her; I was fearfully miserable, broken down, but I could not weep—I wandered about like one possessed. They decked her out, as they always do, and laid her on a table—in this very room. The priest came, the deacons came, began to sing, to pray, and to burn incense; I bowed to the ground, but did not shed a single tear. My heart seemed turned to stone—and my head too—I was heavy all over. So passed my first day. Would you believe it? I even slept in the night. The next morning I went in to look at my wife; it was summertime, the sunshine fell upon her from head to foot, and it was so bright. Suddenly I saw..." (here Radilov gave an involuntary shudder) "what do you think? One of her eyes was not quite shut, and on this eye a fly was crawling... I fell down in a heap, and when I came to myself, I began to weep and weep... I could not stop myself..."

Radilov was silent. I looked at him, then at Olga... I can never forget the expression of her face. The old lady had laid the stocking down on her knees and taken a handkerchief out of her reticule; she was stealthily wiping away her tears. Fyodor Mikheich suddenly got up, seized his fiddle, and in a wild and hoarse voice began to sing a song. He wanted doubtless to restore our spirits; but we all shuddered at his first note, and Radilov asked him to be quiet.

"Still what is past, is past," he continued. "We cannot recall the past, and in the end... all is for the best in this world below... as I think Voltaire said," he added hurriedly.

"Yes," I replied, "of course. Besides, every trouble can be endured, and there is no position so terrible that there is no escape from it."

"Do you think so?" said Radilov. "Well, perhaps you are right. I recollect I lay once in the hospital in Turkey half dead; I had typhus fever. Well, our quarters were nothing to boast of—of course, in time of war—and we had to thank God for what we had! Suddenly they bring in more sick—where are they to put them? The doctor goes here and there—there is no room left. So he comes up to me and asks the attendant, 'Is he alive?' He answers, 'He was alive this morning.' The doctor bends down, listens; I am breathing. The good man could not help saying, 'Well, what an absurd constitution; the man's dying; he's certain to die, and he keeps hanging on, lingering, taking up space for nothing, and keeping out others.' 'Well,' I thought to myself, 'So you're in a bad way, Mikhail Mikhailich...' And, after all, I got well, and am still alive, as you may see for yourself. You are right, to be sure."

"In any case I am right," I replied. "Even if you had died, you would just the same have escaped from your horrible position."

"Of course, of course," he added, with a violent blow of his fist on the table. "One has only to come to a decision... What is the use of being in a horrible position?... What is the good of delaying, lingering?"

Olga rose quickly and went out into the garden.

"Come, Fyodor, a dance!" cried Radilov.

Fyodor jumped up and walked about the room with that artificial and peculiar gait which is affected by the man who plays the part of a goat with a tame bear. He sang meanwhile, 'At our gates'...

The rattle of a racing droshky sounded in the drive, and in a few minutes a tall, broad-shouldered and stoutly made man, the freeholder Ovsyanikov, came into the room.

But Ovsyanikov is such a remarkable and original personage that, with the reader's permission, we will put off speaking about him till the next sketch. And now I will only add for myself that the next day I started off hunting at earliest dawn with Ermolai, and returned home after the day's sport was over; that a week later I went again to Radilov's, but did not find him or Olga at home, and within a fortnight I learned that he had suddenly disappeared, left his mother, and gone away somewhere with his sister-in-law. The whole gubernia was excited, and talked about this event, and I only then completely

understood the expression of Olga's face while Radilov was telling us his story. It was breathing not sympathetic suffering only: it was burning with jealousy.

Before leaving the country I called on old Madame Radilova. I found her in the drawing-room; she was playing cards with Fyodor Mikheich.

"Have you news of your son?" I asked her at last.

The old lady began to weep. I made no more inquiries about Radilov.

THE FREEHOLDER OVSYANIKOV

Picture to yourselves, gentle readers, a stout, tall man of seventy, with a face reminding one somewhat of the face of Krylov, our writer of fables, clear and intelligent eyes under overhanging brows, dignified in bearing, slow in speech, and deliberate in movement: there you have Ovsyanikov. He wore an ample blue frock-coat with long sleeves, buttoned all the way up, a lilac silk handkerchief round his neck, brightly polished boots with tassels, and altogether resembled in appearance a well-to-do merchant. His hands were handsome, soft, and white; he often fumbled with the buttons of his coat as he talked. With his dignity and his composure, his good sense and his indolence, his uprightness and his obstinacy, Ovsyanikov reminded me of the Russian boyars of the times before Peter the Great . . . Their holiday dress would have suited him well. He was one of the last men left of the old time. All his neighbours had a great respect for him, and considered it an honour to be acquainted with him. His fellow-freeholders almost worshipped him, and took off their hats to him from a distance: they were proud of him. Generally speaking, in these days it is difficult to tell a freeholder from a peasant; his farm is almost worse than the peasant's; his calves are wretchedly small; his horses are only half alive; his harness is made of rope. Ovsyanikov was an exception to the general rule, though he did not pass for a wealthy man. He lived alone with his wife in a clean and comfortable little house, kept a few servants, whom he dressed in the Russian style and called his "workmen". They were employed also in ploughing his land. He did not attempt to pass for a nobleman, did not affect to be a landlord; never, as they say, forgot himself; he did not take a seat at the first invitation to do so, and he never failed to rise from his seat on the entrance of a new guest, but with such dignity, with such stately courtesy, that the guest involuntarily made him a more

deferential bow. Ovsyanikov adhered to the old usages, not from superstition (he was naturally rather independent in mind), but from habit. He did not, for instance, like carriages with springs, because he did not find them comfortable, and preferred to drive in a droshky, or in a pretty little trap with leather cushions, and he always drove his good bay himself (he kept none but bay horses). His coachman, a young, rosy-cheeked fellow, his hair cut round, in a dark-blue belted coat and a low sheepskin cap, sat respectfully beside him. Ovsyanikov always had a nap after dinner and visited the bath-house on Saturdays; he read none but religious books and used gravely to fix his round silver spectacles on his nose when he did so; he got up and went to bed early. He shaved his beard, however, and wore his hair in the German style. He always received visitors cordially and affably, but he did not bow down to the ground, nor fuss over them and press them to partake of every kind of dried and salted delicacy. "Wife!" he would say deliberately, not getting up from his seat, but only turning his head a little in her direction, "bring the gentlemen a little of something to eat." He regarded it as a sin to sell wheat: it was the gift of God. In the year '40, at the time of the general famine and terrible scarcity, he shared all his store with the surrounding landlords and peasants; the following year they gratefully repaid their debt to him in kind. The neighbours often had recourse to Ovsyanikov as arbitrator and mediator between them, and they almost always acquiesced in his decision, and listened to his advice. Thanks to his intervention, many had conclusively settled their boundaries. But after two or three tussles with lady-landowners, he announced that he declined all mediation between persons of the female sex. He could not bear the flurry and excitement, the chatter of women and the "fuss". Once his house had somehow got on fire. A workman ran to him in headlong haste shrieking, "Fire, fire!" "Well, what are you screaming about?" said Ovsyanikov tranquilly, "give me my cap and my stick." He liked to break in his horses himself. Once a spirited horse he was training bolted with him down a hillside to a ravine. "Come, there, there, you young colt, you'll kill yourself!" said Ovsyanikov soothingly to him, and an instant later he flew over the edge together with the droshky, the boy who was sitting behind, and the horse. Fortunately, the bottom of the ravine was covered with heaps of sand. No one was injured; only the horse sprained a leg. "Well, you see," continued Ovsyanikov in a calm voice as he got up from the ground, "I told you so." He had found a wife to match him.

Tatyana Ilyinichna Ovsyanikova was a tall woman, dignified and taciturn, always wearing a cinnamon-coloured silk head-scarf. She had a cold air, though none complained of her severity, but, on the contrary, many poor creatures called her their mother and benefactress. Her regular features, her large dark eyes, and her delicately cut lips, bore witness even now to her once celebrated beauty. Ovsyanikov had no children.

I made his acquaintance, as the reader is already aware, at Radilov's, and two days later I went to see him. I found him at home, sitting in a large leather arm-chair and reading the *Lives of the Saints*. A grey cat was purring on his shoulder. He received me, according to his habit, with stately cordiality. We fell into conversation.

"But tell me the truth, Luka Petrovich," I said to him, among other things, "weren't things better of old, in your time?"

"In some ways, certainly, things were better, I should say," replied Ovsyanikov. "We lived more easily; there was a greater abundance of everything. All the same, things are better now, and they will be better still for your children, please God."

"I had expected you, Luka Petrovich, to praise the old times."

"No, I have no special reason to praise old times. Here, for instance, though you are a landlord now, and just as much a landlord as your grandfather was, you have not the same power—and, indeed, you are not yourself the same kind of man. Some noblemen still oppress us; but, of course, it is impossible to help that altogether. Where there are mills grinding there will be flour. No, I don't see now what I have seen in my youth."

"What, for instance?"

"Well, for instance, I will tell you about your grandfather. He was an overbearing man; he trod rough shod over us poor folk. You know, perhaps—indeed, you surely know your own estates—that bit of land that runs from Chepligin to Malinin—you have it under oats now. Well, you know, it is ours—it is all ours. Your grandfather took it away from us; he rode by on his horse, pointed to it with his hand, and said, 'My property,' and took possession of it. My father (God rest his soul!) was a just man; he was a hot-tempered man, too; he would not put up with it—indeed, who does like to lose his property?—and he laid a petition before the court. But he was alone: the others did not appear—they were afraid. So they reported to your grandfather that 'Pyotr Ovsyanikov is making a complaint against you that you were pleased to take away his land.' Your grandfather at once sent his

huntsman Baush with a troop of men . . . Well, they seized my father and carried him to your estate. I was a little boy at that time; I ran after him barefoot. What happened? They brought him to your house and flogged him right under your windows. And your grandfather stands on the balcony and looks on; and your grandmother sits at the window and looks on, too. My father cries out, 'Gracious lady, Marya Vassilyevna, intercede for me! Have mercy on me!' But her only answer was to keep getting up to have a better look. So they exacted a promise from my father to give up the land, and bade him be thankful they let him go alive. So it has remained with you. Go and ask your peasants—what do they call the land? It's called 'The Cudgelled Land', because it was gained by the cudgel. So you see from that, we poor folks can't bewail the old order very much."

I did not know what answer to make Ovsyanikov, and I had not the courage to look him in the face.

"We had another neighbour who settled amongst us in those days, Komov, Stepan Niktopolionich. He used to worry the life out of my father; when it wasn't one thing, it was another. He was a drunken fellow, and fond of treating others; and when he was drunk he would say in French, '*C'est bon*,' lick his lips, and then make the holy images blush. He would send to all the neighbours to ask them to come to him. His horses stood always in readiness, and if you wouldn't go he would come after you himself at once! . . . And he was such a strange fellow! In his sober times he was not a liar; but when he was drunk he would begin to relate how he had three houses in St. Petersburg—one red, with one chimney; another yellow, with two chimneys; and a third blue, with no chimneys; and three sons (though he had never even been married), one in the infantry, another in the cavalry, and the third his own master . . . And he would say that in each house lived one of his sons; that admirals visited the eldest, and generals the second, and the third only Englishmen! Then he would get up and say, 'To the health of my eldest son; he is the most dutiful!' and he would begin to weep. Woe to anyone who refused to drink the toast! 'I'll shoot you!' he would say, 'and I won't let you be buried! . . . ' Then he would jump up and scream, 'Dance, God's people, for your pleasure and my diversion!' Well, then, you must dance; if you had to die for it, you must dance. He led his serf-girls a terrible life. Sometimes all night long till morning they would be singing in chorus, and the one who made the most noise would have a prize. If they began to be tired, he would lay his head down in his hands and begin moaning,

'Ah, poor forsaken orphan that I am! They want to abandon me!' And the stable men would wake the girls up at once. He took a liking to my father, worse luck! He almost drove my father into his grave, and he would have driven him into it for sure, but (thank Heaven!) he died himself; in one of his drunken fits he fell off the pigeon-house . . . There, that's what our sweet neighbours were like!"

"How the times have changed!" I observed.

"Yes, yes," Ovsyanikov assented. "And there is this to be said—in the old days the nobility lived more sumptuously. I know what I'm talking about, I saw enough of real grantees in Moscow. They say such people are scarce nowadays."

"You have been in Moscow?"

"I used to stay there long, very long ago. I am now in my seventy-first year; and I went to Moscow when I was sixteen."

Ovsyanikov sighed.

"Whom did you see there?"

"I saw a great many grantees—and everyone saw them; they kept open house for the wonder and admiration of all! Only no one came up to Count Alexei Grigoryevich Orlov-Chesmensky. I often saw Alexei Grigoryevich; my uncle was a steward in his service. The count was pleased to live in Shabolovka, near the Kaluga Gate. He was real grantee! Such stateliness, such gracious condescension you can't imagine! And it's impossible to describe it. His stature alone was worth something, and his strength, and the look in his eyes! Till you knew him, you did not dare come near him—you were afraid, overawed indeed; but directly you came near him he was like sunshine warming you up and making you quite cheerful. He allowed every man access to him in person, and he was devoted to every kind of sport. He drove himself in races and took on everyone, and he would never get in front at the start, so as not to offend his adversary, but would only pass him at the finish; and he was so pleasant—he would soothe his adversary, praising his horse. He kept first-rate tumbler-pigeons. He would come out into the court, sit down in an arm-chair, and order them to let loose the pigeons; and his men would stand all round on the roofs with guns to keep off the hawks. A large silver basin of water used to be placed at the count's feet, and he looked at the pigeons reflected in the water. Beggars and poor people were fed in hundreds at his expense; and what a lot of money he used to give away! . . . When he got angry, it was like a clap of thunder. Everyone was in a great fright, but there was nothing to weep over;

before a minute passed, he was all smiles again! When he gave a banquet he made all Moscow drunk! And see what a clever man he was! You know he beat the Turk. He was fond of wrestling too; strong men used to come from Tula, from Kharkov, from Tambov, and from everywhere to him. If he threw anyone he would pay him a reward; but if anyone threw him, he perfectly loaded him with presents, and kissed him on the lips...

"And once, during my stay at Moscow, he arranged a hunting party such as had never been in Russia before; he sent invitations to all the hunters in the whole empire, and fixed a day for it, and gave them three months' notice. They brought with them dogs and grooms; well, it was an army of people—a regular army! First they had a banquet in the usual way, and then they set off into the open country. The people flocked there in thousands! And what do you think? ... Your grandfather's dog outran them all."

"Wasn't that Milovidka?" I inquired.

"Milovidka, Milovidka! ... So the count began to press him. 'Sell me your dog,' says he. 'Take what you like for her.' 'No, count,' your grandfather said, 'I am not a tradesman; I've never sold a rag; for honour's sake I am ready to cede my wife even, but not Milovidka. I would give myself into bondage first.' And Alexei Grigoryevich praised him for it. 'I like you for it,' he said. Your grandfather took her back in the coach with him, and when Milovidka died, he buried her in the garden with music at the burial—yes, and put a stone with an inscription on it over the dog."

"Then, Alexei Grigoryevich did not oppress anyone," I observed.

"Yes, it is always like that: the smaller the fry, the meaner they are."

"And what sort of a man was this Baush?" I asked after a short silence.

"Why, how comes it you have heard about Milovidka, and not about Baush? He was your grandfather's chief huntsman and whipper-in. Your grandfather was as fond of him as of Milovidka. He was a desperate fellow, and whatever order your grandfather gave him, he would carry it out in a minute—he'd have run on to a sword at his bidding ... And when he halloed ... the forest air groaned from end to end. And then he would suddenly turn obstinate, get off his horse, and lie down on the ground ... and directly the dogs ceased to hear his voice, it was all over! They would give up the hottest scent, and

wouldn't go on for anything. Ai, ai, didn't your grandfather get angry! 'Damn me, if I don't hang the scoundrel! I'll turn him inside out, the antichrist! I'll stuff his heels down his gullet, the cut-throat!' And it ended by his sending to find out what he wanted; why he wouldn't halloo to the hounds? Usually, on such occasions, Baush asked for some vodka, drank it up, got on his horse, and began to halloo as lustily as ever again."

"You seem to be fond of hunting, too, Luka Petrovich!"

"I should have been—certainly, not now; now my time is over—but in my young days . . . But you know it was not an easy matter in my position. It was not for people like us to try and keep up with the noblemen. Certainly you could find in our class some drinking, good-for-nothing fellow who would join with the gentry on a hunt—but he did not get much pleasure out of it. He only brought shame on himself. They gave him a wretched stumbling nag, kept knocking his hat off on to the ground and cut at him with a whip, pretending to whip the horse, and he must laugh at everything, and be a laughing-stock for the others. No, I tell you, the lower your station, the more you must stand on your dignity, or else you disgrace yourself directly.

"Yes," continued Ovsyanikov with a sigh, "there's many a gallon of water has flowed down to the sea since I have been living in the world; times are different now. Especially I see a great change in the nobility. The smaller landlords have all either become officials, or at any rate do not stop here; as for the larger owners, there's no making them out. I have had enough experience of them—the larger landlords—in the matter of settling boundaries. And I must tell you, it does my heart good to see them: they are courteous and affable. Only this is what astonishes me: they have studied all the sciences, they speak so fluently that your heart is melted, but they don't understand the actual business in hand; they don't even perceive what's their own interest; some bailiff, a bond servant, bends them just any way he pleases. There's Korolyov—Alexander Vladimirovich—for instance; you know him, perhaps—isn't he every inch a nobleman? He is handsome, rich, has studied at the 'versities, and travelled, I think, abroad; he speaks simply and easily, and shakes hands with us all. You know him? . . . Well, listen then. Last week we assembled at Beryozovka at the summons of the mediator, Nikifor Ilyich. And the mediator, Nikifor Ilyich, says to us: 'Gentlemen, we must settle the boundaries; it's disgraceful; our uyezd is behind

all the others'; we must get to work.' Well, so we got to work. There followed discussions, disputes, as usual; our attorney began to make objections. But the first to make an uproar was Porfiry Ovchinnikov... And what had the fellow to make an uproar about?... He hasn't an acre of ground; he is acting as representative of his brother. He bawls, 'No, you shall not fool me! No, I am not a dupe. Give the plans here! Give me the surveyor's plans, the Judas's plans here!' 'But what is your claim, then?' 'Oh, you think I'm a fool! Indeed! Do you suppose I am going to lay bare my claim to you offhand? No, let me have the plans here—that's what I want!' And he himself is banging his fist on the plans all the time. Then he mortally offended Marfa Dmitrievna. She shrieks out, 'How dare you asperse my reputation?' 'Your reputation,' says he, 'I shouldn't like my chestnut mare to have your reputation.' They poured him out some Madeira at last, and so quieted him; then others began to make a row. Alexander Vladimirovich Korolyov, the dear fellow, sat in a corner nibbling the knob of his cane, and only shook his head. I felt ashamed; I could hardly sit it out. 'What must he be thinking of us?' I said to myself. When, behold! Alexander Vladimirovich has got up, and shows signs of wanting to speak. The mediator became all flustered, said, 'Gentlemen, gentlemen, Alexander Vladimirovich wishes to speak.' And I must give them their due: they were all silent at once. And so Alexander Vladimirovich began to speak. 'We seemed to have forgotten,' he said, 'what we have come together for; indeed, the fixing of boundaries is indisputably advantageous for owners of land, but actually what is its object? To make things easier for the peasant, so that he could work and pay his dues more conveniently; that now the peasant hardly knows his own land, and often goes to work five miles away; and one can't hold it against him.' Then Alexander Vladimirovich said that it was disgraceful for a landowner not to interest himself in the well-being of his peasants; that in the end, if you look at it rightly, their interests and our interests are inseparable; if they are well off we are well off, and if they do badly we do badly, and that, consequently, it was injudicious and wrong to disagree over trifles'... and so on—and so on... There, how he did speak! It went right to your heart... All the gentry hung their heads; I myself, faith, all but shed a tear. To tell the truth, you would not find speeches like that in the old books even... But what was the end of it? He himself would not give up four acres of peat marsh, and wasn't willing to sell it. He said, 'I am going to have my people drain that marsh, and

set up a cloth factory on it, with all the latest improvements. I have already,' he said, 'fixed on that place; I have thought out my plans on the subject.' And if only that had been the truth, it would be all very well; but the simple fact is, Alexander Vladimirovich's neighbour, Anton Karasikov, had refused to pay Korolyov's bailiff for a hundred rubles. And so we separated without having done anything. But Alexander Vladimirovich considers to this day that he is right, and still talks of the cloth factory; but he does not start draining the marsh."

"And how does he manage in his estate?"

"He is always introducing new ways. The peasants don't speak well of him—but who listens to them? Alexander Vladimirovich is doing right."

"How's that, Luka Petrovich? I thought you kept to the old ways."

"I—that's another thing. You see I am not a nobleman or a landlord. What sort of farm is mine? . . . Besides, I don't know how to do things differently. I try to act according to justice and the law, and leave the rest in God's hands! Young gentlemen don't like the old methods; I think they are right . . . It's time we learned. Only this is the pity of it; the young gentlemen overreach themselves. They treat the peasant like a doll; they turn him this way and that way; twist him about, break him and throw him away. And their bailiff, a serf, or some German overseer, gets the peasant under his thumb again. Now, if any one of the young gentlemen would set us an example, would show us, 'See, this is how you ought to manage!' . . . What will be the end of it? Can it be that I shall die without seeing the new methods? . . . How can it be that the old is dead, but the young is not born!"

I did not know what reply to make to Ovsyanikov. He looked round, drew himself nearer to me, and went on in an undertone:

"Have you heard talk of Vassily Nikolaich Lubozvonov?"

"No, I haven't."

"Explain to me, please, what does it mean, the way he carries on. I can't make anything of it. His own peasants have told me about him, but I can't make any sense of their tales. He is a young man, you know; it's not long since he received his heritage from his mother. Well, he arrived at his estate. The peasants were all collected to have a look at their master. Vassily Nikolaich came out to them, and the peasants' eyes popped out: the master wore plush pantaloons like

a coachman, and he had on boots with trimming at the top; he wore a red shirt and a coachman's long coat, too; he had let his beard grow, and had such a strange hat and such a strange face—could he be drunk? No, he wasn't drunk, and yet he didn't seem quite in his right mind. 'Good health to you, lads!' he says; 'God keep you!' The peasants bow to the ground, but without speaking; they were struck dumb, you know. And he, too, seemed timid. He began to make a speech to them. 'I am a Russian,' he says, 'and you are Russians; I like everything Russian... Russia,' says he, 'is my heart, and my blood, too, is Russian...' Then he suddenly gives the order: 'Come lads, sing a Russian national song!' The peasants' legs shook under them with fright; they were utterly stupefied. One bold spirit did strike up a song, but he sat down at once on the ground and hid himself behind the others... And what is most surprising is this: we have had landlords like that, dare-devil gentlemen, regular rakes: they dressed pretty much like coachmen, and danced and played the guitar, and sang and drank with their house-serfs and feasted with the peasants; but this Vassily Nikolaich is like a girl; he is always reading books or writing, or else declaiming poetry aloud—he never speaks to any one; he is shy, walks by himself in his garden; seems either bored or sad. The old bailiff at first was in a thorough scare; before Vassily Nikolaich's arrival he made the round of all the peasants' houses; he bowed to all of them—one could see the cat knew whose butter he had eaten! And the peasants were full of hope; they thought, 'Ah, you're in for it, they'll make you answer for it, my dear; they'll lead you a dance now, you robber!...' But instead of this it has turned out—how shall I explain it to you?—God Almighty could not account for how things have turned out! Vassily Nikolaich summoned him to his presence and said, blushing red and breathing quick, you know, 'Be upright in my service; don't oppress any one—do you hear?' And since that day he has never asked to see him again! He lives on his own property like a stranger. Well, the bailiff came to again, and the peasants don't dare to go to Vassily Nikolaich; they are afraid. And do you see what's a matter for wonder again: the master even bows to them and looks graciously at them; but he seems to turn their stomachs with fright! What do you say to such a strange state of things, your honour? Either I have grown stupid in my old age, or something... I can't understand it."

I said to Ovsyanikov that Mr. Lubozvonov must certainly be ill.

"Ill, indeed! He's as broad as he's long, and his face, what shall

I say, is so portly, too, though he is so young . . . Well, God knows!" And Ovsyanikov gave a deep sigh.

"Come, putting the nobles aside," I began, "what have you to tell me about the freeholders, Luka Petrovich?"

"No, you must let me off that," he said hurriedly. "Truly . . . I could tell you . . . but what's the use!" Ovsyanikov waved his hand. "We had better have some tea . . . We are common peasants and nothing more; but when we come to think of it, what else could we be?"

He ceased talking. Tea was served. Tatyana Ilyinichna rose from her place and sat down nearer to us. In the course of the evening she several times went noiselessly out and as quietly returned. Silence reigned in the room. Ovsyanikov drank cup after cup with gravity and deliberation.

"Mitya has been to see us today," said Tatyana Ilyinichna in a low voice.

Ovsyanikov frowned.

"What does he want?"

"He came to ask forgiveness."

Ovsyanikov shook his head.

"Come, tell me," he went on, turning to me, "what is one to do with relations? On the one hand, to abandon them altogether is impossible . . . Here God has bestowed on me a nephew. He's a fellow with brains—a smart fellow—I don't dispute that; he has had a good education, but I don't expect much good to come of him. He went into civil service; threw up his position—didn't get on fast enough, if you please . . . Does he suppose he's a noble? And even noblemen don't come to be generals all at once. So now he is living without an occupation. And that, even, would not be such a great matter—except that he has taken to litigation! He gets up petitions for the peasants, writes memorials; he instructs the village delegates, drags the surveyors over the coals, frequents drinking houses, is seen in taverns with townsmen and scavengers. He's bound to come to grief before long. The constables and police captains have threatened him more than once already. But he luckily knows how to turn it off—he makes them laugh; but then he boils their kettle for them . . . But there, isn't he sitting in your little room?" he added, turning to his wife. "I know you, you're so soft-hearted—you will always take his part."

Tatyana Ilyinichna dropped her eyes, smiled and blushed.

"Well, I see it is so," continued Ovsyanikov. "Fie! you spoil the

boy! Well, tell him to come in . . . So be it, then; for the sake of our good guest I will forgive the silly fellow. Go, tell him to come in."

Tatyana Ilyinichna went to the door and cried, "Mitya!"

Mitya, a young man of twenty-eight, tall, well-made, and curly-headed, came into the room and, seeing me, stopped short in the doorway. His costume was in the German style, but the unnatural size of the puffs on his shoulders was enough alone to prove convincingly that the tailor who had cut it was a Russian.

"Well, come in, come in," began the old man; "why are you bashful? You must thank your aunt—you're forgiven. Here, your honour, I commend him to you," he continued, pointing to Mitya. "He's my own nephew, but I can't manage him at all. The end of the world is coming!" (We bowed to one another.) "Well, tell me what is this you have got mixed up in? What is the complaint they are making against you? Explain it to us."

Mitya obviously did not care to explain matters and justify himself before me.

"Later on, uncle," he muttered.

"No, not later—now," pursued the old man. "You are ashamed, I see, before this gentleman; all the better—it's only what you deserve. Speak, speak; we are listening."

"I have nothing to be ashamed of," began Mitya spiritedly, with a toss of his head. "Be so good as to judge for yourself, uncle. Some freeholders of Reshetilovo came to me and said, 'Defend us, brother.' 'What is the matter?' 'This is it: our grain stores were in perfect order—in fact, they could not be better; all at once a government inspector came to us with orders to inspect the granaries. He inspected them and said, 'Your granaries are badly kept—serious neglect; it's my duty to report it to the authorities.' 'But what does the neglect consist in?' 'That's my business,' he says . . . We met together and decided to tip the official in the usual way; but old Prokhorich prevented us. He said, 'No, that's only giving him a taste for more. Come; after all, haven't we any justice?' We obeyed the old man, and the official got in a rage, and made a complaint, and wrote a report. So now we are called up to answer to his charges. 'But are your granaries actually in order?' I asked. 'God knows they are in order; and the legal quantity of corn is in them.' 'Well, then,' says I, 'you have nothing to fear'; and I drew up a document for them. It is not yet known in whose favour it will be decided. And as to the complaints they have made to you about me over that affair—it's very

easy to understand that—every man's shirt is nearest to his own skin."

"Everyone's, indeed—but not yours seemingly," said the old man in an undertone. "But what plots have you been hatching with the Shutolomov peasants?"

"How do you know of it?"

"Never mind; I do know of it."

"And there, too, I am right—judge for yourself again. A neighbouring landowner, Bessandin, has ploughed up fifteen acres of the Shutolomov peasants' land. 'The land's mine,' he says. The Shutolomov people are on rent; their landlord has gone abroad—who is to stand up for them? Tell me yourself? But the land is theirs beyond dispute; they've held it for ages and ages. So they came to me and said, 'Write us a petition.' So I wrote one. And Bessandin heard of it and began to threaten me. 'I'll break every bone in his body, and knock his head off his shoulders.' We shall see how he will knock it off; it's still on, so far."

"Come, don't boast; it's headed a bad way, your head," said the old man. "You're a mad fellow altogether!"

"Why, uncle, what did you tell me yourself?"

"I know, I know what you will say," Ovsyanikov interrupted him; "of course a man ought to live uprightly, and to help his neighbour. Sometimes one must not spare oneself. But do you always behave in that way? Don't they take you to the tavern, eh? Don't they treat you; bow to you, eh? 'Mitya,' they say, 'help us, and we will prove our gratitude to you.' And they slip a silver ruble or note into your hand. Eh? doesn't that happen? Tell me, doesn't that happen?"

"I am guilty of that, true enough," answered Mitya, rather confused; "but I take nothing from the poor, and I don't act against my conscience."

"You don't take from them now; but when you are badly off yourself, then you will. You don't act against your conscience—fie on you! Of course, they are all saints whom you defend!... Have you forgotten Boris Perekhodov? Who was it interceded for him? Who took him under his protection—eh?"

"Perekhodov suffered through his own fault, certainly."

"He appropriated the public money. That's no joke!"

"But, consider, uncle, his poverty, his family."

"Poverty, poverty... He's a drunkard, a quarrelsome fellow; that's what it is!"

"He took to drink through trouble," said Mitya, dropping his voice.

"Through trouble, indeed! Well, you might have helped him, if your heart was so warm to him, but there was no need for you to sit in taverns with the drunken fellow yourself. Though he did speak so finely . . . a prodigy, to be sure!"

"He is a very good fellow."

"Everyone is good with you. But did you send him . . ." pursued Ovsyanikov, turning to his wife, "come, you know what?"

Tatyana Ilyinichna nodded.

"Where have you been lately?" the old man began again.

"I have been in town."

"You have been doing nothing but playing billiards, I wager, and drinking tea, and strumming the guitar, and running to and fro about the offices, drawing up petitions in little back-rooms, flaunting about with merchants' sons? Isn't that so? Tell us!"

"Perhaps that is about it," said Mitya with a smile. "Ah! I had almost forgotten—Funtikov, Anton Parfenich asks you to dine with him next Sunday."

"I shan't go to see that old tub. He gives you costly fish and puts rancid butter on it. I don't want to have anything to do with him."

"And I met Fedosya Mikhailovna."

"What Fedosya is that?"

"She belongs to Garpenchenko, the landowner, who bought Mikulino by auction. Fedosya is from Mikulino. She lived in Moscow as a dress-maker, paying her service in money, and she paid her service-money accurately—a hundred and eighty-two rubles and a half a year . . . And she knows her business; she got good orders in Moscow. But now Garpenchenko has ordered her back, and he just keeps her here, but does not provide any duties for her. She would be prepared to buy her freedom, and has spoken to the master, but he will not give any decisive answer. You are acquainted with Garpenchenko, uncle . . . Couldn't you just say a word to him? And Fedosya would give a good price for her freedom."

"Not with your money, I hope? Hey? Well, well, all right. I will speak to him, I will speak to him. But I don't know," continued the old man with a troubled face, "this Garpenchenko, God forgive him! is a shark; he buys up debts, lends money at interest, purchases estates at auctions . . . And who brought him into our parts? Ugh, I

can't bear these new-comers! One won't get an answer out of him very quickly. However, we shall see."

"Try to manage it, uncle."

"Very well, I will try. Only see you behave yourself! There, there, don't defend yourself. It's all right. Only take care for the future, or else, Mitya, upon my word, it will go ill with you. Upon my word, you will come to grief. I can't always screen you . . . and I myself am not a man of influence. There, go now, and God be with you!"

Mitya went away. Tatyana Ilyinichna went out after him.

"Give him some tea, you soft-hearted creature," cried Ovsyanikov after her. "He's not a stupid fellow," he continued, "and he has a good heart, but I feel afraid for him . . . But pardon me for having so long kept you occupied with such trifles."

The door from the hall opened. A short grizzled little man wearing a velvet coat came in.

"Ah, Frants Ivanich!" cried Ovsyanikov. "Good day to you. Is God merciful to you?"

Allow me, gentle reader, to introduce to you this gentleman.

Frantz Ivanich Lejeune, my neighbour, and a landlord of Orel gubernia, had arrived at the respectable position of a Russian nobleman in a not quite ordinary way. He was born in Orleans of French parents, and had gone with Napoleon on the invasion of Russia, in the capacity of a drummer. At first all went smoothly, and our Frenchman arrived in Moscow with his head held high. But on the return journey poor Monsieur Lejeune, half-frozen and without his drum, fell into the hands of some peasants of Smolensk. The peasants shut him up for the night in an empty cloth factory, and the next morning brought him to an ice-hole near the dyke, and began to beg the drummer "*de la grrrrande armée*" to oblige them, in other words, to dive into the hole. Monsieur Lejeune could not agree to their proposition, and in his turn began to try to persuade the Smolensk peasants, in the dialect of France, to let him go to Orleans. "There, *messieurs*," he said, "my mother is living, *une tendre mère*." But the peasants, doubtless through their ignorance of the geographical position of Orleans, continued to offer him a journey under water along the course of the meandering river Gniloterka, and had already begun to encourage him with slight blows on the vertebrae of the neck and back, when suddenly, to the undescribable delight of Lejeune, the sound of bells was heard, and there came along the dyke a huge sledge with a striped rug over its excessively high dickey, harnessed

with three roan horses. In the sledge sat a stout and red-faced landlord in a wolfskin pelisse.

"What is it you are doing there?" he asked the peasants.

"We are drowning a Frenchman, your honour."

"Ah!" replied the landlord indifferently, and he turned away.

"*Monsieur! Monsieur!*" shrieked the poor fellow.

"Ah, ah!" observed the wolfskin pelisse reproachfully, "you came with twenty nations into Russia, burnt Moscow, tore down—you damned heathen!—the cross from Ivan the Great, and now—mossoo, mossoo, indeed—now you tremble in your shoes! You are paying the penalty of your sins!... Go on, Filka!"

The horses were starting.

"Stop, though!" added the landlord. "Eh? you mossoo, do you know anything of music?"

"*Sauvez-moi, sauvez-moi, mon bon monsieur!*" repeated Lejeune.

"There, see what a wretched people they are! Not one of them knows Russian! Muzeek, muzeek, savey muzeek voo? Savey? Well, speak, do! Compreny? Savey muzeek voo? On the piano, zhooy savey?"

Lejeune comprehended at last what the landlord meant, and persistently nodded his head.

"*Oui, monsieur, oui, oui, je suis musicien; je joue tous les instruments possibles! Oui, monsieur... Sauvez-moi, monsieur!*"

"Well, thank your lucky star!" replied the landlord. "Lads, let him go, here's a twenty-kopeck piece for vodka."

"Thank you, your honour, thank you. Take him, your honour."

They sat Lejeune in the sledge. He was gasping with delight, weeping, shivering, bowing, thanking the landlord, the coachman, the peasants. He had nothing on but a green jacket with pink ribbons, and it was freezing very hard. The landlord took a look at his blue and benumbed limbs in silence, wrapped the unlucky fellow in his own pelisse, and brought him home. The household ran out. They soon thawed the Frenchman, fed him, and clothed him. The master conducted him to his daughters.

"Here, children!" he said to them. "A teacher is found for you. You were always pestering me to have you taught music and the French jargon; here you have a Frenchman, and he plays on the piano... Come, mossoo," he went on, pointing to a wretched little instrument he had bought five years before of a Jew, whose special

line was eau-de-Cologne, "give us an example of your art; zhooey!"

Lejeune, with a sinking heart, sat down on the music-stool; he had never touched a piano in his life.

"Zhooey, zhooey!" repeated the landlord.

In desperation, the unhappy man beat on the keys as though on a drum, and played at hazard. "I quite expected," he used to tell afterwards, "that my deliverer would seize me by the collar and throw me out of the house." But, to the utmost amazement of the involuntary improviser, the landlord, after listening a while, patted him good-humouredly on the shoulder.

"Good, good," he said, "I see you can do it; go now and rest yourself."

Within a fortnight Lejeune had gone from this landlord's to stay with another, a rich and cultivated man. He gained his friendship by his bright and gentle disposition, married to a ward of his, went into civil service, rose to the nobility, married his daughter to Lobizanyev, a landowner of Orel, a retired dragoon and versifier, and settled himself on an estate in Orel.

It was this same Lejeune, or rather, as he is called now, Frantz Ivanich, who came in to see Ovsyanikov, with whom he was on friendly terms.

But perhaps the reader is already weary of sitting with me at the Ovsyanikov's, and so I will become eloquently silent.

LGOV

"Let us go to Lgov," Ermolai, whom the reader knows already, said to me one day. "There we can shoot ducks to our heart's content."

Although wild duck offers no special attraction for a genuine sportsman, still, through lack of other game at the time (it was the beginning of September; snipe were not on the wing yet, and I was tired of running across the fields after partridges), I acted upon my huntsman's suggestion, and we went to Lgov.

Lgov is a large village of the steppes, with a very old stone church, and two mills on the swampy little river Rosota. Three versts from Lgov, this river becomes a wide swampy pond, overgrown at the edges, and in places also in the centre, with thick reeds. Here, in the pools between the reeds, live and breed a countless multitude of ducks of all possible kinds—mallards, pintails, teals, pochards, etc. Small flocks are for ever flitting above water, and at a gun-shot, they rise in such clouds that the hunter involuntarily clutches his hat with one hand and utters a prolonged "phew!" I walked with Ermolai along the bank; but, in the first place, the duck is a wary bird, and is not to be met quite close to the bank; and secondly, even when some straggling and inexperienced teal exposed itself to our shots and lost its life, our dogs were not able to get it out of the thick reeds; in spite of their most devoted efforts they could neither swim nor tread on the bottom, and only cut their precious noses on the sharp reeds for nothing.

"No," was Ermolai's comment at last, "it won't do; we must get a boat. Let us go back to Lgov."

We started back. We had only gone a few paces when a rather wretched-looking setter-dog ran out from behind a bushy willow to meet us, and behind him appeared a man of middle height, in a blue

and much worn frock-coat, a yellow waistcoat, and pantaloons of a nondescript grey colour, hastily tucked into high boots full of holes, with a red bandanna round his neck, and a single-barrelled gun on his shoulder. While our dogs, with the usual Chinese ceremonies peculiar to their species, were sniffing at their new acquaintance, who was obviously ill at ease, held his tail between his legs, dropped his ears back, and kept turning round and round, baring his teeth—the stranger approached us and bowed with extreme civility. He appeared to be about twenty-five; his long dark hair, perfectly saturated with kvass, stood up in stiff tufts; his small brown eyes twinkled genially; his face was bound up in a black scarf, as though for toothache; his countenance was all smiles and amiability.

"Allow me to introduce myself," he began in a soft and insinuating voice. "I am a hunter of these parts—Vladimir . . . Having heard of your arrival, and having learnt that you proposed to visit the shores of our pond, I resolved, if it were not displeasing to you, to offer you my services."

The hunter Vladimir uttered those words for all the world like a young provincial actor in the rôle of leading lover. I agreed to his proposition, and before we had reached Lgov I had learned his entire history. He was a freed house-serf; in his tender youth had been taught music, then served as valet, could read and write, had read—so much I could discover—some few trashy books, and existed now, as many do exist in Russia, without a farthing of ready money; without any regular occupation; fed by manna from heaven, or something hardly less precarious. He expressed himself with extraordinary elegance, and obviously plumed himself on his manners; he must have been devoted to the fair sex, too, and in all probability popular with them: Russian girls love fine talking. Among other things, he gave me to understand that he sometimes visited the neighbouring landlords, and went to stay with friends in town, where he played preference, and that he was acquainted with people in the metropolis. His smile was masterly and exceedingly varied; what specially suited him was a modest, contained smile which played on his lips as he listened to any other man's conversation. He was attentive to you; he agreed with you completely, but still he did not lose sight of his own dignity, and seemed to wish to give you to understand that he could, if occasion arose, express convictions of his own. Ermolai, not being very refined, and quite devoid of "subtlety", began to

address him with coarse familiarity. The fine irony with which Vladimir used "sir" in his reply was worth seeing.

"Why is your face tied up?" I inquired. "Have you toothache?"

"No," he answered, "it was a most disastrous consequence of carelessness. I had a friend, a good fellow, but not a bit of a sportsman, as sometimes occurs. Well, one day he said to me, 'My dear friend, take me out shooting; I am curious to learn what this diversion consists in.' I did not like, of course, to refuse a comrade; I procured him a gun and took him out shooting. Well, we shot a little in the ordinary way; at last we thought we would rest. I sat down under a tree: but he began instead to play with his gun, pointing it at me meantime. I asked him to leave off, but in his inexperience he did not attend to my words, the gun went off, and I lost half my chin, and the index finger of my right hand."

We reached Lgov. Vladimir and Ermolai had both decided that we could not shoot without a boat.

"Suchok has a punt," observed Vladimir, "but I don't know where he has hidden it. We must go to him."

"To whom?" I asked.

"The man lives here; Suchok is his nickname."

Vladimir went with Ermolai to Suchok's. I told them I would wait for them at the church. While I was looking at the tombstones in the churchyard, I stumbled upon a blackened, four-cornered urn with the following inscription on one side in French: "*Ci gît Théophile Henri vicomte de Blangy*"; on the next: "Under this stone is laid the body of a French subject, Count Blangy; born 1737, died 1799, in the 62nd year of his age"; on the third: "Peace to his ashes"; and on the fourth:

*Under this stone there lies from France an emigrant.
Of high descent was he, and also of talent.
A wife and kindred murdered he bewailed,
And left his land by tyrants cruel assailed;
The friendly shores of Russia he attained,
And hospitable shelter here he gained;
Children he taught; their parents' cares allayed;
Here, by God's will, in peace he has been laid.*

The approach of Ermolai with Vladimir and the man with the strange nickname, Suchok, broke in on my meditations.

Bare-legged, ragged and dishevelled, Suchok looked like a discharged house-serf of some sixty years old.

"Have you a boat?" I asked him.

"I have a boat," he answered in a hoarse, cracked voice, "but it's a very poor one."

"How so?"

"Its boards are split apart, and the stuffing has come out of the cracks."

"That's no great disaster!" interposed Ermolai. "We can stuff them up with tow."

"Of course you can," Suchok assented.

"And who are you?"

"I am the fisherman of the manor."

"How is it, when you're a fisherman, your boat is in such bad condition?"

"There are no fish in our river."

"Fish don't like slimy marshes," observed my huntsman, with the air of an authority.

"Come," I said to Ermolai, "go and get some tow, and make the boat right for us as soon as you can."

Ermolai went off.

"Well, in this way we may very likely go to the bottom," I said to Vladimir.

"God is merciful," he answered. "Anyway, we must suppose that the pond is not deep."

"No, it is not deep," observed Suchok, who spoke in a strange, far-away voice, as though he were in a dream, "and there's weeds and mud at the bottom, and it's all overgrown with sedge. But there are deep holes, too."

"But if the sedge is so thick," said Vladimir, "it will be impossible to row."

"Who thinks of rowing in a punt? One has to push. I will go with you; my pole is there—or else one can use a wooden spade."

"With a spade it won't be easy; you won't touch the bottom perhaps in some places," said Vladimir.

"It's true; it won't be easy."

I sat down on a tombstone to wait for Ermolai. Vladimir moved a little to one side out of respect to me, and also sat down. Suchok remained standing in the same place, his head bent and his hands clasped behind his back, according to the old habit of house-serfs.

"Tell me, please," I began, "have you been the fisherman here long?"

"It is six years now," he replied, rousing himself with a start.

"And what was your occupation before?"

"I was coachman before."

"Who dismissed you from being coachman?"

"The new mistress."

"What mistress?"

"Oh, the one that bought us. Your honour does not know her, Alyona Timofeyevna; she is a fat woman... not young."

"Why did she decide to make you a fisherman?"

"God knows. She came to us from her estate in Tambov, gave orders for all the household to come together, and came out to us. We first kissed her hand, and she said nothing; she was not angry... Then she began to question us in order: 'How are you employed? What duties have you?' When my turn came she asked, 'What have you been?' I say, 'Coachman.' 'Coachman? Well, a fine coachman you are; only look at you! You're not fit for a coachman, but be my fisherman, and shave your beard off. On the occasions of my visits provide fish for the table; do you hear?... ' So since then I have been a fisherman. 'And mind you keep my pond in order.' But how is one to keep it in order?"

"Whom did you belong to before?"

"To Sergei Sergeich Pekhterev. We came to him by inheritance. But he did not own us long; only six years altogether. I was his coachman... but not in town, he had others there—only in the country."

"And were you always a coachman from your youth up?"

"Always a coachman? Oh, no! I became a coachman in Sergei Sergeich's time, but before that I was a cook—but not town cook; only a cook in the country."

"Whose cook were you, then?"

"Oh, my former master's, Afanasy Nefedich, 'Sergei Sergeich's uncle. Lgov was bought by him, by Afanasy Nefedich, but it came to Sergei Sergeich by inheritance from him."

"Who did he buy it from?"

"From Tatyana Vassilyevna."

"What Tatyana Vassilyevna was that?"

"Why, that died last year in Bolkhov... that is, at Karachev, an old maid... She had never married. Don't you know her? We came

to her from her father, Vassily Semyonich. She owned us a goodish while . . . twenty years."

"Then were you cook to her?"

"At first, to be sure, I was cook, and then I was coffee-bearer."

"What were you?"

"Coffee-bearer."

"What sort of duty is that?"

"I don't know, your honour. I stood at the sideboard, and was called Anton instead of Kuzma. The mistress ordered that I should be called so."

"Your real name, then, is Kuzma?"

"Yes."

"And were you coffee-bearer all the time?"

"No, not all the time; I was an actor, too."

"Really?"

"Yes, I was . . . I played in the theatre. Our mistress set up a theatre of her own."

"What kind of parts did you take?"

"What did you please to say?"

"What did you do in the theatre?"

"Don't you know? Why, they take me and dress me up; and I walk about dressed up, or stand, or sit down there as it happens, and they say, 'See, this is what you must say,' and I say it. Once I represented a blind man. They laid little peas under each eyelid . . . Yes, indeed."

"And what were you afterwards?"

"Afterwards I became a cook again."

"Why did they degrade you to cook again?"

"My brother ran away."

"Well, and what were you under the father of your first mistress?"

"I had different duties; at first I was a boy; I have been a postilion, a gardener, and a whipper-in."

"A whipper-in? . . . And did you ride out with the hounds?"

"Yes, I rode with the hounds, and was nearly killed; I fell off my horse, and the horse was injured. Our old master was very stern; he ordered them to flog me and to send me to learn a trade to Moscow, to a shoemaker."

"To learn a trade? But you weren't a child, I suppose, when you were a whipper-in?"



Ivan Turgenev (right) with his brother Nikolai, 1824. A watercolour from the collection of Mme Maupoil. The boys are wearing fancy dress, and in their hands they are holding a map which was part of the game



A view of Orel, the town on the Oka, where Ivan Turgenev was born. First half of the 19th century. There were twenty odd stone buildings, and several old churches, but in the main the town was built up with wooden houses.



Varvara Petrovna Turgeneva, née Lutovinova (1787-1850), the writer's mother.
From a miniature made soon after 1800.



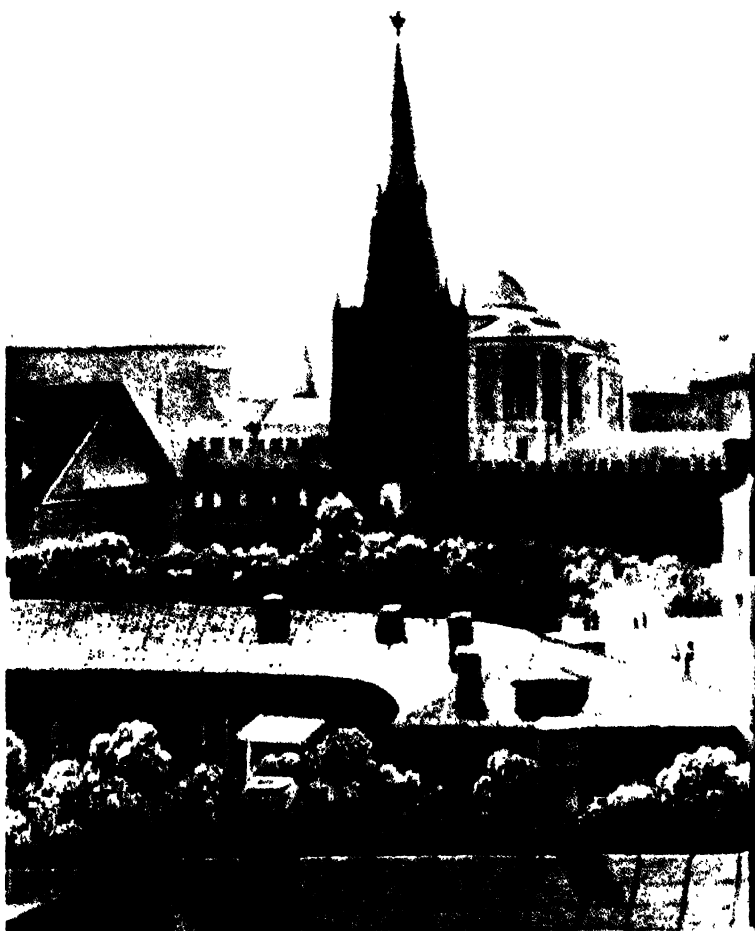
Sergei Nikolayevich Turgenev (1793-1834), the writer's father, officer of the guards, later a retired colonel. This portrait was painted presumably in 1815 when he was serving in the Chevaliers Gardes. "My father was a very handsome man," Ivan Turgenev said. "I can say this because I don't resemble him in the slightest, having taken after my mother."



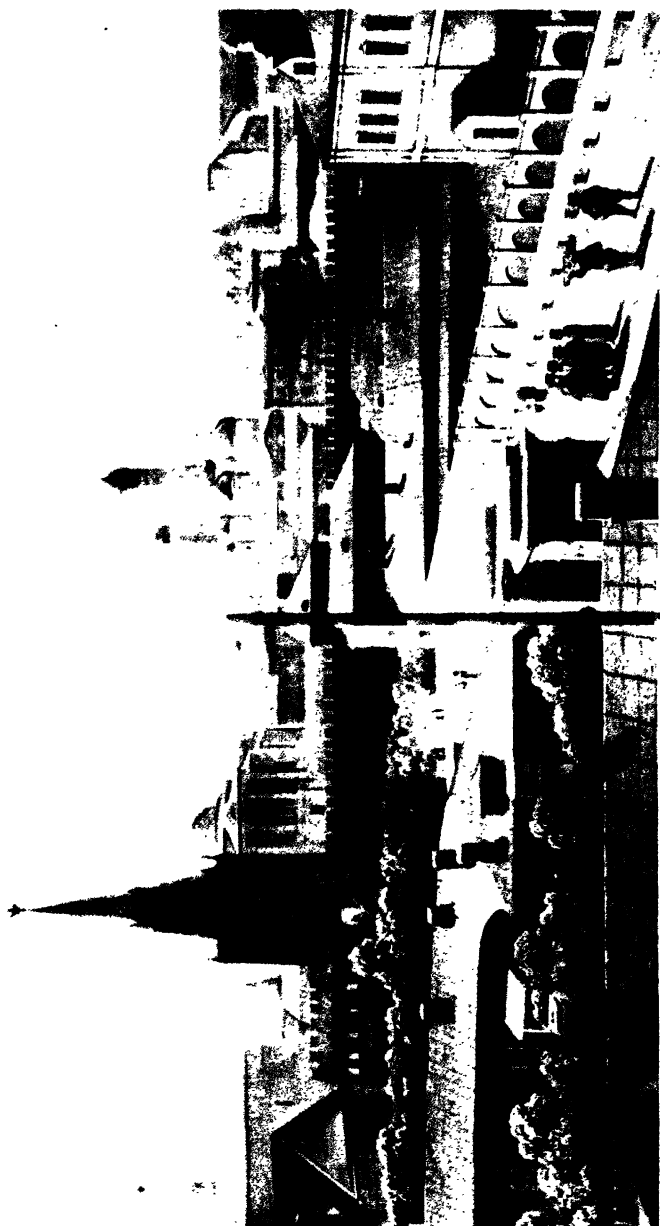
The Turgenevs' home in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, Orel Gubernia. From a photograph by V. Karrik, 1883. This is, in fact, a reconstructed surviving wing of the original manor house that had been destroyed by fire in 1839



"Collecting Arrears", by V. Pukirev (1869-70). This scene was a typical one for the Russian village in mid-nineteenth century when a peasant family had its livestock and implements requisitioned in payment of arrears



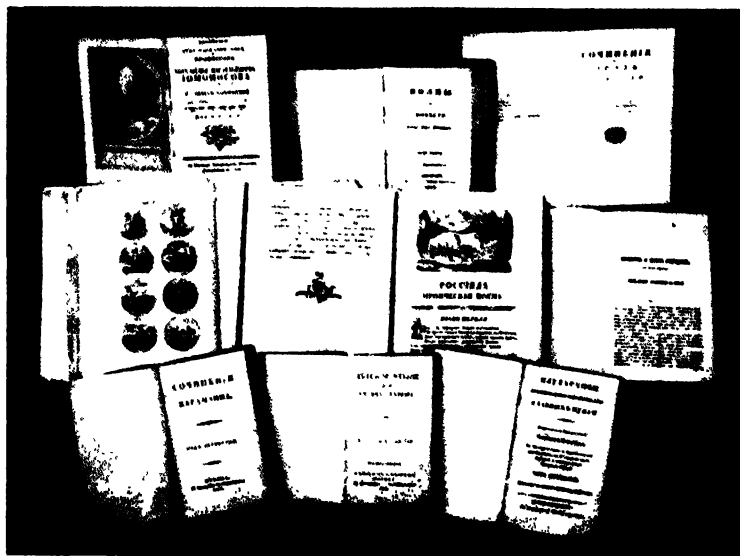
Moscow in the 19th century Lithograph by Cuvilier.



Moscow in the 19th century. Lithograph by Cuvillier.



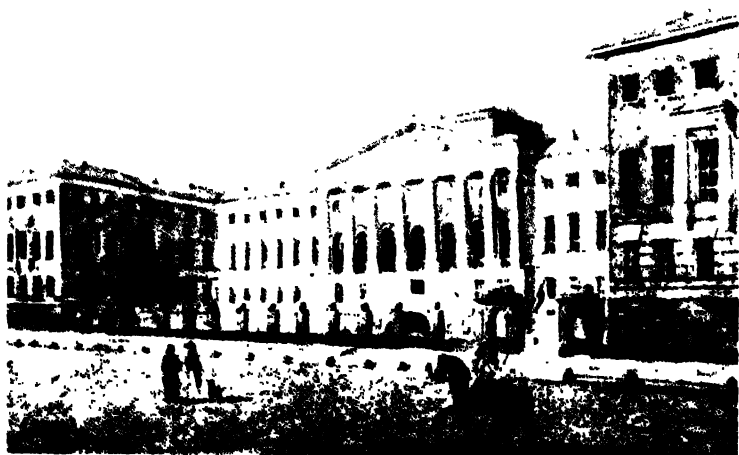
Moscow. The Turgenev family lived here in 1831. The picture of this house in Ryleyev Street (formerly Gagarinsky Lane), which is protected by the state as a monument of history and architecture, was taken in 1828.



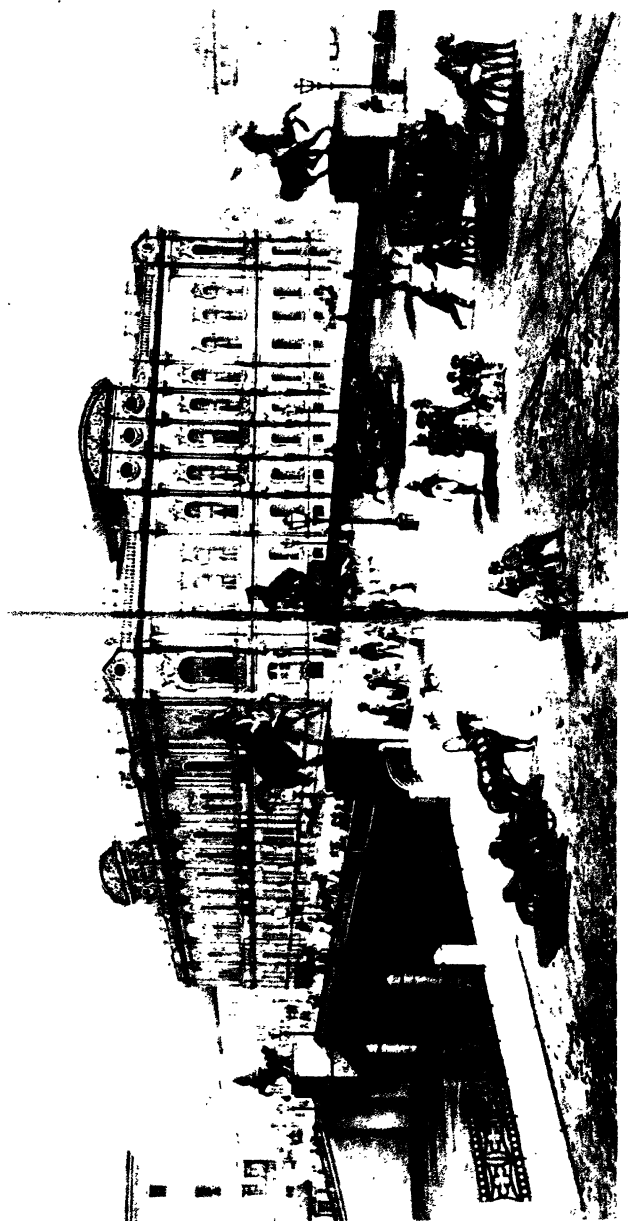
These books by Lomonosov, Karamzin and Plutarch and other authors belonged to the family library in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo and were part of Turgenev's boyhood reading.



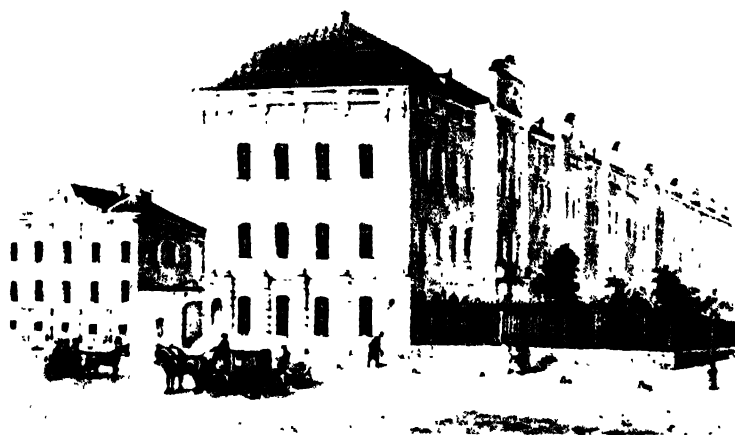
One of the buildings of I. Weidenhammer's boarding school in Moscow where Ivan Turgenev stayed from 1828 to 1830.



Moscow University. Watercolour by Afanasiev. The building was designed by Matvei Kazakov and erected in 1786-98. After the great Moscow fire of 1812, it was rebuilt by architect Gilardi. Turgenev was a student of the University in 1833-34.



St. Petersburg. Nevsky Prospekt and Anichkov Bridge. Mid-nineteenth century lithograph. Turgenev studied and served in St. Petersburg, but was more attached to Moscow and wrote a great deal about it



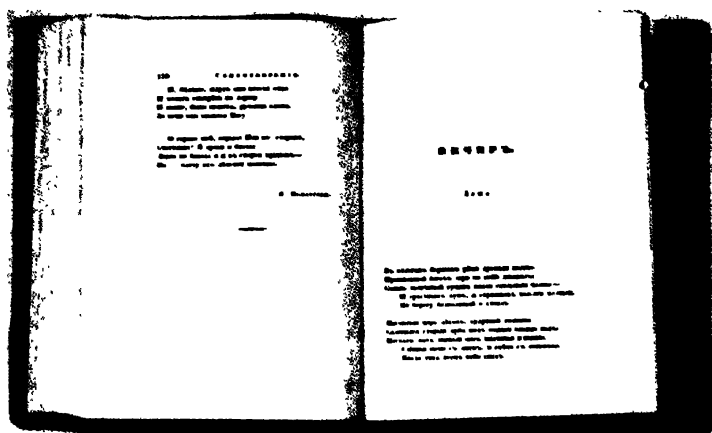
St. Petersburg University. One of the university buildings erected in the reign of Peter I to house the Ministries. Lithograph, 1854.



The house of V. Engelgardt in Nevsky Prospekt, St. Petersburg. A lithograph, 1835. Turgenev met Pushkin at a concert given here early in 1837, and wrote in his *Recollections*: "He stood in the door, leaning against the door jamb, his arms crossed on his broad chest, and glanced about him with a look of displeasure."



Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837), the great Russian poet. Portrait by V. Tropinin, 1827.



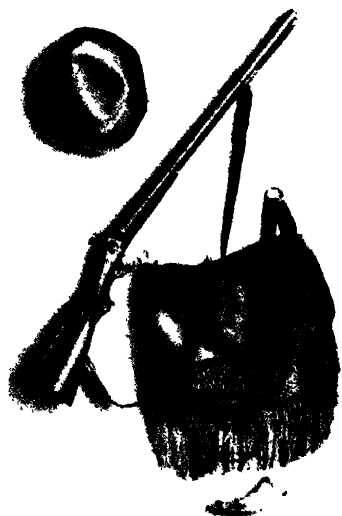
The poem "Evening", the first to be published by Turgenev (*The Sovremennik*, No. 2, 1838)



Pyotr Pletnyov (1795-1865), poet and critic, rector of St Petersburg University when Turgenev was a student there, and one of the young writer's instructors in literature.



Mikhail Lermontov (1814-1841), an outstanding Russian poet. Portrait by P. Zabolotsky, 1837. Lermontov is shown here in the uniform of an officer in the Hussars. He was discharged from this Guards regiment for his anti-government poem written on Pushkin's death, and demoted to the acting army in the Caucasus. Turgenev met Lermontov at a ball in 1839 wearing this resplendent uniform. Lermontov was the literary idol of St. Petersburg's young people.



Turgenev's hunting hat, gun, bag and horn
on display at the museum in Orel.



Ermolai and Valetka. An illustration made for *A Hunter's Sketches* by P. P. Sokolov
in 1891-92.

"I was twenty and over then."

"But could you learn a trade at twenty?"

"I suppose one could, since the master ordered it. But he luckily died soon after, and they sent me back to the country."

"And when were you taught to cook?"

Suchok lifted his thin yellowish little old face and grinned.

"Is that a thing to be taught? Women can cook."

"Well," I commented, "you have seen many things, Kuzma, in your time! What do you do now as a fisherman, seeing there are no fish?"

"Oh, your honour, I don't complain. And, thank God, they made me a fisherman. Why, another old man like me—Andrei Pupir—the mistress ordered to be put into the paper mill, as a ladler. 'It's a sin,' she said, 'to eat bread in idleness.' And Pupir had even hoped for favour; his cousin's son was clerk in the mistress's counting-house; he had promised to say a word for him to the mistress; a fine word he said to him!... And Pupir begged him on his bended knees before my eyes."

"Have you a family? Have you been married?"

"No, your honour, I have never been married. Tatyana Vassilyevna—God rest her soul!—did not allow anyone to marry. 'God forbid!' she said. 'Here I am living single; why should they marry? What next?'"

"What do you live on now? Do you get wages?"

"Wages, your honour!... Victuals are given me, and thanks be to Thee, Lord! I am very contented. May God give our lady long life!"

Ermolai returned.

"The boat is repaired," he announced churlishly. "Go after your pole—you there!"

Suchok ran to get his pole. During the whole time of my conversation with the poor old man, the hunter Vladimir had been staring at him with a contemptuous smile.

"A stupid fellow," was his comment, when the latter had gone off, "an absolutely uneducated fellow; a peasant, nothing more. One cannot even call him a house-serf, and he was boasting all the time. How could he be an actor, be pleased to judge for yourself! You troubled yourself for no good talking to him."

A quarter of an hour later we were sitting in Suchok's punt. We left the dogs in a hut in charge of my coachman. We were not very comfortable, but hunters are not a fastidious race. At the flat rear

end stood Suchok, punting; I sat with Vladimir on the planks laid across the boat, and Ermolai ensconced himself in front, in the very prow. In spite of the tow, the water soon seeped in under our feet. Fortunately, the weather was calm and the pond seemed slumbering.

We moved ahead rather slowly. The old man had difficulty in drawing his long pole out of the sticky mud; it came up all tangled in green threads of water-weeds; the flat round leaves of the water-lily also hindered the progress of our boat. At last we reached to the reeds, and then the fun began. Ducks flew up noisily, scared by our unexpected appearance in their domains, shots followed at once, it was a pleasant sight to see these short-tailed birds turning somersaults in the air, splashing heavily into the water. We could not, of course, get at all the ducks that were shot; those which were slightly wounded dived; some of the ones which had been killed fell into such thick reeds that even Ermolai's little lynx eyes could not discover them, yet by dinner-time our boat was nevertheless filled to the brim with game.

Vladimir, to Ermolai's great satisfaction, did not shoot at all well; he seemed surprised after each unsuccessful shot, looked at his gun and blew down the barrel, seemed puzzled, and at last explained to us the reason why he had missed his aim. Ermolai, as always, shot triumphantly; I—rather badly, after my custom. Suchok looked on at us with the eyes of a man who has been the servant of others from his youth up; now and then he cried out, "There, there, there's another little duck"; and he constantly rubbed his back, not with his hands, but by a peculiar movement of the shoulder-blades. The weather kept magnificent; curly white clouds moved calmly high above our heads, and were reflected clearly in the water; the reeds were whispering around us; the pond sparkled in the sunshine like steel. We were preparing to return to the village, when suddenly a rather unpleasant adventure befell us.

For a long time we had been aware that the water was gradually filling our punt. Vladimir was entrusted with the task of baling it out by means of a ladle, which my thoughtful huntsman had stolen to be ready for this emergency from a peasant woman who was looking the other way. All went well so long as Vladimir did not neglect his duty. But towards the end the ducks, as if in farewell, rose in such flocks that we scarcely had time to load our guns. In the heat of the sport we did not pay attention to the state of our punt—when suddenly

Ermolai, in trying to reach a wounded duck, leaned his whole weight on the boat's edge; at his over-eager movement our old tub careened began to fill, and majestically sank to the bottom, fortunately not in a deep place. We cried out, but it was too late; in an instant we were standing in the water up to our necks, surrounded by the floating bodies of the slaughtered ducks. I cannot help laughing now when I recollect the scared white faces of my companions (probably my own face was not particularly rosy at that moment either), but I must confess at the time it did not enter my head to feel amused. Each of us kept his gun above his head, and Suchok, no doubt from the habit of imitating his masters, lifted his pole above him. The first to break the silence was Ermolai.

"Curse it!" he muttered, spitting into the water; "here's a go. It's all you, you old devil!" he added, turning wrathfully on Suchok, "call this a boat!"

"I'm sorry," stammered the old man.

"Yes; and you're a nice one," continued my huntsman, turning his head in Vladimir's direction; "what were you thinking of? Why weren't you baling out?"

But Vladimir was not equal to a reply: he was shaking like a leaf, his teeth were chattering, and his smile was utterly meaningless. What had become of his eloquence, his feeling of fine distinctions, and of his own dignity!

The accursed punt rocked feebly under our feet. At the instant of our ducking the water seemed terribly cold to us, but we soon got hardened to it. When the first shock had passed off, I looked round me; the reeds rose up ten paces from us; in the distance above their tops the bank could be seen. "It looks bad," I thought.

"What are we to do?" I asked Ermolai.

"Well, we'll take a look round; we can't spend the night here," he answered. "Here, you, take my gun," he said to Vladimir.

Vladimir obeyed without a word.

"I will go and find the ford," continued Ermolai, as though there must infallibly be a ford in every pond; he took the pole from Suchok and went off in the direction of the bank, warily sounding the depth as he walked.

"Can you swim?" I asked him.

"No, I can't," came from behind the reeds.

"Then he'll be drowned," remarked Suchok indifferently. He had been terrified at first, not by the danger, but by our anger, and now,

completely reassured, he drew a long breath from time to time, and seemed not to be aware of any necessity for moving from his present position.

"And he will perish without doing any good," added Vladimir piteously.

Ermolai did not return for more than an hour. That hour seemed an eternity to us. At first we kept calling to him very energetically; then his answering shouts grew less frequent; at last he was completely silent. The bells in the village began ringing for evening service. There was not much conversation between us; indeed, we tried not to look at one another. The ducks dashed over our heads; some seemed disposed to settle near us, but suddenly rose up into the air and flew away quacking. We began to grow numb. Suchok blinked his eyes as though he were disposing himself to sleep.

At last, to our indescribable delight, Ermolai returned.

"Well?"

"I have been to the bank; I have found the ford. Let us go."

We wanted to set off at once; but he first brought some string out of his pocket and out of the water, tied the slaughtered ducks together by their legs, took both ends in his teeth, and moved slowly forward; Vladimir came behind him, and I behind Vladimir, and Suchok brought up the rear. It was about two hundred paces to the bank. Ermolai walked boldly and without stopping (so well had he noted the track), only occasionally crying out, "More to the left—there's a hole here to the right!" or "Keep to the right—you'll sink in there to the left..." Sometimes the water was up to our necks, and twice poor Suchok, who was shorter than all the rest of us, got a mouthful and spluttered. "Come, come, come!" Ermolai shouted roughly to him—and Suchok, scrambling, hopping and thrashing his legs, managed to reach a shallower place, but even in his greatest extremity was never so bold as to clutch at the skirt of my coat. Worn out, muddy and wet, we at last reached the bank.

Two hours later we were all sitting, as dry as circumstances would allow, in a large hay barn, preparing for supper. My coachman, an exceedingly deliberate man, cautious and sleepy, stood at the entrance, zealously plying Suchok with snuff (I have noticed that coachmen in Russia very quickly make friends); Suchok was taking snuff with frenzied energy, in quantities to make him ill; he was spitting, sneezing, and apparently enjoying himself hugely. Vladimir

had assumed an air of languor; he leaned his head on one side, and spoke little. Ermolai was cleaning our guns. The dogs were wagging their tails at a great rate in the expectation of porridge; the horses were stamping and neighing in the outhouse . . . The sun had set; its last rays streamed in broad tracts of purple; golden clouds were drawn out over the heavens into finer and ever finer threads, like a fleece washed and combed out . . . There was the sound of singing in the village.

BEZHIN MEADOW

It was a glorious July day, one of those days which only come after many days of fine weather. From earliest morning the sky is clear; the sunrise does not flame with fire but suffuses the sky with a soft roseate flush. The sun, not fiery, not red-hot as in time of stifling drought, not dull purple as before a storm, but with a bright and genial radiance, rises peacefully behind a long and narrow cloud, shines out freshly, and plunges again into its lilac mist. The delicate upper edge of the strip of cloud flashes in little gleaming snakes; their brilliance is like beaten silver. But, lo! The dancing rays flash forth again, and in solemn joy, as though flying upward, rises the mighty orb. About midday there is wont to appear, high up in the sky, a multitude of rounded clouds, golden-grey, with soft white edges. Like islands scattered over an overflowing river, that nurses them in its arms of even transparent blue, they scarcely stir; farther down the heavens they are in movement, packing closer; there is no blue to be seen between them, but they are themselves almost as blue as the sky, filled full with light and warmth. The colour of the horizon, a faint pale lilac, does not change all day, and is the same all round; nowhere is there storm gathering and darkening; only in places streaks of bluish colour stretch down from the sky; it is a sprinkling of scarce perceptible rain. In the evening these clouds disappear; the last of them, blackish and undefined as smoke, settle in pinkish piles, on the side of the horizon opposite the setting sun; in the place where it has gone down, as calmly as it rose, a crimson glow lingers briefly over the darkening earth, and, softly flickering like a candle carried by a cautious hand, the evening star flashes on in the sky. On such days all the colours are softened, bright but not glaring; everything is suffused with a kind of touching tenderness. On such days the heat is sometimes very great; often it is even "steaming" on the slopes

of the fields, but a wind dispels this growing sultriness, and whirling eddies of dust—sure sign of settled fine weather—move along the roads and across the fields in tall white columns. In the pure dry air there is a scent of wormwood ripe, rye in blossom, and buckwheat; even an hour before nightfall there is no dampness in the air. It is for such weather that the farmer longs, for harvesting his wheat...

On just such a day I was once out grouse-shooting in the Chern Uyezd of Tula Gubernia. I started and shot a fair amount of game; my full game-bag cut my shoulder mercilessly; but already the evening glow had faded, and the cool shades of twilight were beginning to grow thicker and to spread across the sky, which was still light, though no longer illumined by the rays of the setting sun, when I at last decided to turn back homewards. With swift steps I passed through the long "square" of brush, clambered up a hill, and instead of the familiar plain I expected to see, with the oak wood on the right and the little white church in the distance, I saw before me a scene completely different, and quite new to me. A narrow valley lay at my feet, and directly facing me a dense wood of aspen-trees rose up like a tall wall. I stood still in perplexity, looked round me... "Aha!" I thought, "I have somehow come wrong; I kept too much to the right," and surprised at my own mistake, I rapidly descended the hill. I was at once plunged into a disagreeable clinging dampness, exactly as though I had gone down into a cellar; the thick high grass at the bottom of the valley, all drenched with dew, was white like a smooth table-cloth; one felt afraid somehow to walk on it. I made haste to get on the other side and walked along beside the aspen wood, bearing to the left. Bats were already flitting over its slumbering tree-tops, mysteriously circling and quivering across the clear obscure of the sky; a young belated hawk flew in swift, straight course upwards, hastening to its nest. "Here, directly I get to this corner," I thought to myself, "I shall find the road at once; but I have come a verst out of my way!"

I did at last reach the end of the wood, but there was no road of any sort there; some kind of low brushwood overgrown with long grass extended far and wide before me; behind them in the far, far distance could be discerned a trace of wasteland. I stopped again. "Well? Where am I?" I began ransacking my brain to recall how and where I had been walking during the day... "Ah! But this is the Parakhin brushwood," I cried at last. "Of course! then this must be

Sindeyev wood. But how did I get here! So far? . . . Strange! Now I must bear to the right again."

I went to the right through the bushes. Meantime the night had crept close and grown up like a storm-cloud; it seemed as though, with the mists of evening, darkness was rising up on all sides and flowing down from overhead as well. I had come upon some sort of untrodden, overgrown path; I walked along it, gazing intently ahead. Soon all was blackness and silence around—only the quail's cry was heard from time to time. Some small night-bird, flitting noiselessly near the ground on its soft wings, almost flapped against me and dived aside in alarm. I came out on the further side of the brushwood and made my way along a field. By now I could hardly make out distant objects; the field showed dimly-white around; beyond it rose up a sullen darkness, which seemed moving up closer in huge masses every instant. My steps gave a muffled sound in the air that grew increasingly colder. The pale sky began again to grow blue—but it was the blue of night. Tiny stars glimmered and twinkled in it.

What I had been taking for a wood turned out to be a dark round hillock. "But where am I, then?" I repeated again aloud, stopping dead for the third time and looking inquiringly at my spot-and-tan English dog, Dianka by name, certainly the most intelligent of four-footed creatures. But the most intelligent of four-footed creatures only wagged her tail, blinked her weary eyes dejectedly, and gave me no sensible advice. I felt myself disgraced in her eyes and pushed desperately forward, as though I had suddenly guessed which way I ought to go; I scaled the hill and found myself in a hollow of no great depth, ploughed round.

A strange sensation came over me at once. This hollow had the form of an almost perfect cauldron, with sloping sides; at the bottom of it were some great white stones standing upright—it seemed as though they had crept there for some secret council—and it was so still and dark in it, so flat, so dreary seemed the sky overhanging it, that my heart sank. Some little animal squeaked feebly and piteously among the stones. I made haste to get out again on to the hillock. Till then I had not quite given up all hope of finding the way home; but at this point I finally decided that I was utterly lost, and without any further attempt to make out the surrounding objects, which were almost completely plunged in darkness, I walked straight forward, by the aid of the stars, at random . . . For about half an hour I walked on in this way, though I could hardly move one leg before the other. It

seemed as if I had never been in such a deserted country in my life; nowhere was there the glimmer of a fire, nowhere a sound to be heard. One sloping hillside followed another; fields stretched endlessly upon fields; bushes seemed to spring up out of the earth under my very nose. I kept walking and was just making up my mind to lie down somewhere till morning, when suddenly I found myself on the edge of a horrible precipice.

I quickly drew back my lifted foot, and through the almost opaque darkness I saw far below me a vast plain. A broad river skirted it in a semicircle, turned away from me; its course was marked by the steely reflection of the water still faintly glimmering here and there. The hill on which I found myself terminated abruptly in an almost overhanging precipice, whose gigantic profile stood out black against the dark-blue waste of air, and directly below me, in the corner formed by this precipice and the plain near the river, which was there a dark, motionless mirror, under the lee of the hill, two fires were smoking and throwing up red flames side by side. People were stirring round them, shadows hovered, and sometimes the front of a small curly head was lighted up by the glow.

I found out at last where I had got to. This plain was well known in our parts under the name of Bezhin Meadow... But there was no possibility of returning home, especially at night; my legs were sinking under me from weariness. I decided to get down to the fires and to wait for the dawn in the company of these men, whom I took for drovers. I got down successfully, but I had hardly let go of the last branch I had grasped, when suddenly two large shaggy white dogs rushed angrily barking upon me. The sound of ringing boyish voices came from round the fires; two or three boys quickly got up from the ground. I called back in response to their shouts of inquiry. They ran up to me and at once called off the dogs, who were specially struck by the appearance of my Dianka. I came down to them.

I had been mistaken in taking the figures sitting round the fires for drovers. They were simply peasant boys from a neighbouring village, who were in charge of a drove of horses. In hot summer weather they drive the horses out at night to graze in the open country: the gad-flies and gnats would give them no peace in the daytime; they drive out the horses towards evening, and drive them back in the early morning: it's a great treat for the peasant boys. Bare-headed, in old sheepskin coats, they bestride the most spirited nags, and gallop along with merry cries and hooting and ringing laughter, swinging

their arms and legs and leaping into the air. The fine dust rises in yellow clouds and moves along the road; the tramp of hoofs in unison resounds afar; the horses race along, pricking up their ears; in front of all, with his tail in the air and thistles in his tangled mane, tears along some shaggy chestnut, constantly shifting his paces as he goes.

I told the boys I had lost my way. They made place for me and I sat down with them. They asked me where I came from, and then were silent for a little. Then we talked a little again. I lay down under a bush, whose shoots had been nibbled off, and began to look round. It was a marvellous picture; about the fire a red ring of light quivered and seemed to swoon away in the embrace of a background of darkness; the flame flaring up from time to time cast swift flashes of light beyond the boundary of this circle; a narrow tongue of light licked the twigs and darted back at once; long thin shadows, in their turn breaking in for an instant, danced right up to the very fires; darkness was struggling with light. Sometimes, when the fire burnt low and the circle of light shrank together, suddenly out of the encroaching darkness a horse's head was thrust in, bay, with stripped markings, or all white, stared with intent blank eyes upon us, munched a tuft of long grass swiftly, and bending down again, vanished instantly. One could only hear it still munching and snorting. From the circle of light it was hard to make out what was going on in the darkness; everything close at hand seemed shut off by an almost black curtain; but farther away hills and forests were dimly visible in long blurs upon the horizon.

The dark unclouded sky stood, inconceivably immense, solemn, above us in all its mysterious majesty. One felt a sweet oppression at one's heart, breathing in that peculiar, overpowering, yet fresh fragrance—the fragrance of a summer night in Russia. Scarcely a sound was to be heard around. Only at times, in the river near, a big fish would give a sudden splash, and the reeds by the bank would rustle, swaying lightly as the ripples reached it. The fires alone kept up a subdued crackling.

The boys sat round them: there, too, sat the two dogs who had been so eager to devour me. They could not for long after reconcile themselves to my presence, and, drowsily blinking and looking askance at the fire, they growled now and then with a great sense of their own dignity; first they growled, and then whined a little, as though exploring the impossibility of carrying out their desires. There were

altogether five boys: Fedya, Pavlusha, Ilyusha, Kostya and Vanya. (From their talk I learnt their names, and I intend now to introduce them to the reader.)

The first and eldest of all, Fedya, one would take to be about fourteen. He was a well-made boy, with delicate, rather small features, curly fair hair, bright eyes, and a perpetual half-merry, half-absent-minded smile. He belonged, by all appearances, to a well-to-do family, and had ridden out to the meadow not through necessity, but for amusement. He wore a gay print shirt, with a yellow border; a short new overcoat was slung, almost slipping, onto his narrow shoulders; a comb hung from his blue belt. His boots, coming a little way up the leg, were certainly his own—not his father's. The second boy, Pavlusha, had tangled black hair, grey eyes, broad cheek-bones, a pale face pitted with small-pox, a large but well-shaped mouth; his head was too large—"a beer-barrel head", as they say—and his figure was square and clumsy. He was not a good-looking boy—there's no denying it!—and yet I liked him; he looked very sensible and straightforward, and there was a vigorous ring in his voice. He had nothing to boast of in his attire; it consisted simply of a homespun shirt and patched trousers. The face of the third, Ilyusha, was rather uninteresting; it was a long face, with short-sighted eyes and a hook-nose; it expressed a kind of dull, fretful uneasiness; his tightly-drawn lips seemed rigid; his contracted brow never relaxed; he seemed continually blinking from the firelight. His flaxen—almost white—hair hung out in thin wisps under his low felt hat, which he kept pulling down with both hands over his ears. He had on new bast shoes and leggings; a thick string wound three times round his figure carefully held together his neat black smock. Neither he nor Pavlusha looked more than twelve years old. The fourth, Kostya, a boy of ten, aroused my curiosity by his thoughtful and sorrowful look. His whole face was small, thin, freckled, pointed at the chin like a squirrel's; his lips were barely perceptible; but his great black eyes, that shone with liquid brilliance, produced a strange impression: they seemed trying to express something for which the tongue—his tongue, at least—had no words. He was undersized and weakly, and dressed rather poorly. The remaining boy, Vanya, I had not noticed at first; he was lying on the ground, peacefully curled up under a square mat, and only occasionally thrust his curly brown head out from under it; this boy was seven years old at the most.

So I lay under the bush at one side and looked at the boys. A small pot was hanging over one of the fires; in it potatoes were cooking. Pavlusha was looking after them; standing on his knees, he was trying them by poking a splinter of wood into the boiling water. Fedya was lying leaning on his elbow, the skirts of his coat flung out. Ilyusha was sitting beside Kostya, and still kept blinking constrainedly. Kostya's head drooped despondently, and he looked away into the distance. Vanya did not stir under his mat. I pretended to be asleep. Little by little, the boys began talking again.

At first they chatted of one thing and another, the work of tomorrow, the horses; but suddenly Fedya turned to Ilyusha, and, as though taking up again an interrupted conversation, asked him:

"Come then, so you say you've seen the goblin?"

"No, I didn't see him, and no one ever can see him," answered Ilyusha in a weak hoarse voice, the sound of which was wonderfully in keeping with the expression of his face. "I heard him. Yes, and not I alone."

"Where does he live?" asked Pavlusha.

"In the old paper mill."

"Why, do you go to the factory?"

"Of course we do. My brother Avdyushka and I, we are paper-glazers."

"Well!—factory-hands!"

"And how did you hear him, then?" asked Fedya.

"It was like this. It happened that I and my brother Avdyushka, with Fyodor Mikheyev, and Ivashka the Squint-Eyed, and the other Ivashka who comes from the Red Hills, and Ivashka Sukhpukov, too—and there were some other boys there as well—there were about ten of us boys there altogether—the whole shift, that is—it happened that we spent the night at the paper mill; that's to say, it didn't happen, but Nazarov, the overseer, kept us. 'Why,' said he, 'should you waste time going home, boys; there's a lot of work tomorrow, so don't go home, boys.' So we stayed, and were all lying down together, and Avdyushka had just begun to say, 'I say, boys, suppose the goblin were to come?' And before he'd finished saying so, someone suddenly began walking over our heads; we were lying down below, and he began walking upstairs overhead, where the wheel is. We listened: he walked; the boards seemed to be bending under him, they creaked so; then he crossed over, above our heads; all of a sudden the water began to gush over the wheel; the wheel rattled and rattled and began

to turn, though the sluices of the conduit above had been let down. We wondered who could have lifted them up so that the water could run; anyway, the wheel turned and turned a while, and then stopped. Then he went to the door overhead and began coming downstairs, and came down, not hurrying himself; the stairs seemed to groan under him, too . . . Well, he came right down to our door, and waited and waited . . . and all of a sudden the door simply flew open. We jumped up, looked—there was nothing. Suddenly what if the net on one of the vats didn't begin moving; it got up and went rising and ducking and moving in the air as though someone were waving with it, and then it was in its place again. Then, at another vat, a hook came off its nail, and then was on its nail again; and then it seemed as if someone came to the door and suddenly coughed and choked like a sheep, but so loudly! . . . We all fell down in a heap and huddled against one another. Didn't we get a fright that night!"

"I say!" murmured Pavlusha, "what did he cough for?"

"I don't know; perhaps it was the damp."

All were silent for a while.

"Well," inquired Fedya, "are the potatoes done?"

Pavlusha tried them.

"No, they are raw . . . My, what a splash!" he added, turning his face in the direction of the river. "That must be a pike . . . And there's a star falling."

"I say, I can tell you something, brothers," began Kostya in a shrill little voice. "Listen what my Dad told us the other day."

"Well, we are listening," said Fedya with a patronising air.

"You know Gavril, I suppose, the carpenter up in the big village?"

"Yes, we know him."

"And do you know why he is so sorrowful always, never speaks? Do you know? I'll tell you why he's so sorrowful; he went one day, Daddy said, he went, brothers, into the forest nutting. So he went nutting into the forest and lost his way—God only can tell where he got to. So he went on and on, brothers—but 'twas no good!—he could not find the way; and so night came on. So he sat down under a tree. 'I'll wait till morning,' thought he. He sat down and began to drop asleep. As he was falling asleep, suddenly he heard someone call him. He looked up; there was no one. He fell asleep again; again he was called. He looked and looked again; and in front of him there sat a mermaid on a branch, swinging herself, and calling him to her, and

simply dying with laughing; she laughed so . . . And the moon was shining bright, so bright, the moon shone so clear—everything could be seen plain, brothers. So she called him, and she herself was as bright and as white sitting on the branch as some dace or a roach, or like some little carp, so white and silvery . . . Gavril the carpenter was scared stiff, brothers, but she laughed without stopping, and kept beckoning him to her like this. Then Gavril got up; he was wanted to go up to the mermaid, brothers, but—the Lord put him wise, it seems—he crossed himself . . . And it was so hard for him to make that cross, brothers; he said, ‘My hand was simply like a stone; it would not move.’ Ugh! the horrid witch! . . . So when he made the cross, brothers, the mermaid, she left off laughing, and all at once how she began to cry . . . She cried, brothers, and wiped her eyes with her hair, and her hair was green as hemp. So Gavril looked and looked at her, and at last he asked her. ‘Why are you weeping, wild thing of the woods?’ And the mermaid spoke to him like this: ‘If you had not crossed yourself, man,’ she says, ‘you should have lived with me in gladness of heart to the end of your days; and I weep, I am grieved at heart because you crossed yourself; but I will not grieve alone; you, too, shall grieve at heart to the end of your days.’ Then she vanished, brothers, and at once it was plain to Gavril how to get out of the forest . . . Only since then he goes always sorrowful, as you see.”

“Funny!” said Fedya after a brief silence. “How can such an evil thing of the woods ruin a Christian soul—he did not listen to her?”

“There it is,” said Kostya. “Gavril said that her voice was as shrill and plaintive as a toad’s.”

“Did your father tell you that himself?” Fedya went on.

“Yes. I was lying on the shelf-bed; I heard it all.”

“It’s a strange thing. Why should he be sorrowful? . . . But I suppose she liked him, since she called him.”

“She liked him indeed!” cried Ilyusha. “A likely thing! She wanted to tickle him to death, that’s what she wanted. That’s what they do, those mermaids.”

“There ought to be mermaids here, too, I suppose,” observed Fedya.

“No,” answered Kostya, “this is a clear, open place. There’s one thing, though: the river’s near.”

All were silent. Suddenly from out of the distance came a prolonged, resonant, almost wailing sound, one of those inexplicable

sounds of the night, which break upon a profound stillness, rise upon the air, linger, and slowly die away at last. You listen: it is as though there were nothing, yet it echoes still. It is as though someone had uttered a long, long cry upon the very horizon, as though some other had answered him with shrill harsh laughter in the forest, and a faint, hoarse hissing hovers over the river. The boys exchanged frightened looks...

"Christ's aid be with us!" whispered Ilyusha.

"Ah, you craven crows!" cried Pavlusha. "What are you frightened of? Look, the potatoes are done." (They all came up to the pot and began to eat the smoking potatoes; only Vanya did not stir.) "Well, aren't you coming?" said Pavlusha.

But he did not creep out from under his mat. The pot was soon completely emptied.

"Have you heard, boys," began Ilyusha, "what happened with us at Varnavitsi the other day?"

"Near the dam?" asked Fedya.

"Yes, yes, near the dam, the broken-down one. That is a haunted place right enough, and so lonely. All round there are pits and ravines, and there are always snakes in ravines.

"Well, what did happen? Tell us."

"Well, this is what happened. You don't know, perhaps, Fedya, but there a drowned man was buried; he was drowned long, long ago, when the water was still deep; only his grave can still be seen, though it can only just be seen... just a little mound... So one day the bailiff called the huntsman Ermil, and says to him, 'Go to the post, Ermil.' Ermil always rides to collect the mail for us; all his dogs died; they just don't live with him, for some reason, and they have never lived with him, though he's a good huntsman, and everyone likes him. So Ermil went to the post, and he stayed a bit in town, and when he rode back, he was a little tipsy. It was night, a fine night; the moon was shining... So Ermil rode across the dam; his way lay there. So, as he rode along, he saw, on the drowned man's grave, a little lamb, so white and curly and pretty, running about. So Ermil thought, 'I will take him,' and he got down and took him in his arms. Well, the lamb didn't seem to mind notice. So Ermil goes back to his horse, and the horse stares at him, and snorts and shakes his head; however, he calmed him and mounted him with the lamb, and rode on again; he held the lamb in front of him. He looks at him, and the lamb looks him straight in the face. Ermil the huntsman was scared. 'I don't

remember,' he said, 'that lambs ever look at any one like that'; however, he began to stroke it like this on its wool and to say, 'Chucky! chucky!' And the lamb suddenly showed its teeth and said too, 'Chucky! chucky!'"

The boy who was telling the story had hardly uttered this last word when suddenly both dogs got up at once, and, barking convulsively, rushed away from the fire and disappeared in the darkness. All the boys were alarmed. Vanya jumped up from under his mat. Pavlusha ran shouting after the dogs. Their barking quickly grew fainter in the distance. There was the noise of the uneasy tramp of the frightened drove of horses. Pavlusha shouted aloud, "Hey, Sery! Zhuchka!" In a few minutes the barking ceased; Pavlusha's voice sounded still far away. A little more time passed; the boys kept looking about in perplexity, as though expecting something to happen. Suddenly the tramp of a galloping horse was heard; it stopped short by the fire, and, hanging on to the mane, Pavlusha sprang nimbly off it. Both the dogs also leaped into the circle of light and at once sat down, their red tongues hanging out.

"What was it? What was it?" asked the boys.

"Nothing," answered Pavlusha, waving his hand to his horse away.

"The dogs scented something. I thought it was a wolf," he added calmly, drawing deep breaths into his chest.

I could not help admiring Pavlusha. He was very fine at that moment. His ugly face, animated by his swift ride, glowed with hardihood and determination. Without even a switch in his hand, he had, without the slightest hesitation, rushed out into the night alone to face a wolf. "What a splendid fellow!" I thought, looking at him.

"Have you seen any wolves, then?" asked the trembling Kostya.

"There are always a good many of them here," answered Pavlusha, "but they only make troubles in the winter."

He crouched down again before the fire. As he sat down on the ground, he laid his hand on the shaggy head of one of the dogs. For a long while the flattered brute did not turn his head, gazing sidewise with grateful pride at Pavlusha.

Vanya crawled under his mat again.

"What horrors you were telling us, Ilyusha!" began Fedya, whose part it was, as the son of a well-to-do peasant, to lead the conversation. (He spoke little himself, apparently afraid of lowering his dignity.) "And then some evil spirit set the dogs barking... Certainly I have heard that place of yours was haunted."

"Varnavitsi? ... I should think it was haunted! More than once, they say, they have seen the old master there—the late master. He wears, they say, a long coat, and keeps groaning and looking for something on the ground. Once grandfather Trofimich met him. 'What,' says he, 'your honour, Ivan Ivanich, are you pleased to look for on the ground?'"

"He asked him?" put in Fedya in amazement.

"Yes, he asked him."

"Well, I call Trofimich a brave fellow after that ... Well, what did he say?"

"'I am looking for the herb that cleaves all things,' says he. And his voice is so far-away. 'And what, your honour, Ivan Ivanich, do you want with the herb that cleaves all things?' 'The tomb weighs on me; it weighs on me, Trofimich; I want to get away—away.'"

"My word!" observed Fedya. "He didn't get enough living I suppose."

"What a marvel!" said Kostya. "I thought one could only see dead men on All Hallows' Day."

"One can see dead men any time," Ilyusha interposed with conviction. From what I could observe, he knew the village superstitions better than the others. "But on All Hallows' Day you can see the living too; those, that is, whose turn it is to die that year. You need only sit in the church porch and keep looking at the road. They will come by you along the road; those, that is, who will die that year. Last year old Ulyana went to the porch."

"Well, did she see anyone?" asked Kostya inquisitively.

"To be sure she did. At first she sat a long, long while, and saw no one and heard nothing ... Only it seemed as if some dog kept barking somewhere ... Suddenly she looks up: a boy comes along the road with only a shirt on. She looked at him. It was Ivashka Fedoseyev."

"He who died in the spring?" put in Fedya. .

"Yes, he. He came along and never lifted up his head. But Ulyana knew him. And then she looks again: a woman came along. She stared and stared at her ... Ah, God Almighty! ... It was herself coming along the road; Ulyana herself."

"Could it be herself?" asked Fedya.

"Yes, by God, herself."

"Well, but she is not dead yet, you know?"

"But the year is not over yet. And only look at her; her life hangs by a thread."

All were still again. Pavlusha threw a handful of dry twigs on to the fire. They were soon charred by the suddenly leaping flame; they cracked and smoked, and began to contract, curling up their burning ends. Gleams of light in broken flashes glanced in all directions, especially upwards. Suddenly, a white dove flew straight into the bright light, fluttered round and round in terror, bathed in the red glow, and disappeared with a whirr of its wings.

"It's lost its home, I suppose," remarked Pavlusha. "Now it will fly till it gets somewhere, where it can rest till dawn."

"Why, Pavlusha," said Kostya, "might it not be a righteous soul flying to heaven?"

Pavlusha threw another handful of twigs on to the fire.

"Perhaps," he said at last.

"But tell us, please, Pavlusha," began Fedya, "did you in Shalamov also see the heavenly portent?"*

"When the sun could not be seen? Yes, indeed."

"Were you frightened, too?"

"Yes; and we weren't the only ones. Our master, though he talked to us beforehand and said there would be a heavenly portent, yet when it got dark, they say he himself was frightened out of his wits. And in the house-serfs' cottage the cook woman, directly it grew dark, broke all the pots in the oven with the poker. 'Who will eat now?' she said, 'the last day has come.' So the soup was running all about the place. And in the village there were such tales about among us; that white wolves would run over the earth and would eat men, that a bird of prey would pounce down on us, and that they would even see Trishka.**"

"Who is Trishka?" asked Kostya.

"Why, don't you know?" interrupted Ilyusha warmly. "Why, brother, where have you come from not to know Trishka? You're a stay-at-home, one-eyed lot in your village, really! Trishka will be a marvellous man, who will come one day, and he will be such a marvellous man that they will never be able to catch him, and never be able to do anything to him; he will be such a marvellous man. The

* This is what the peasants call an eclipse.—*Author's Note.*

** The popular belief in Trishka is probably derived from some tradition of Antichrist.—*Author's Note*

people will try to seize him; for example, they will come after him with clubs, they will surround him, but he will blind their eyes so that they fall upon one another. They will put him in prison, for example; he will ask for a little water to drink in a bowl; they will bring him the bowl, and he will plunge into it and vanish from their sight. They will put chains on him, but he will only clap his hands—and the chains will fall off him. So this Trishka will go through villages and towns; and this Trishka will be a wily man; he will lead astray Christian people . . . and they will be able to do nothing to him . . . He will be such a marvellous wily man."

"Well, then," continued Pavlusha in his deliberate voice, "that's what he's like. And so they expected him in our parts. The old men declared that directly the heavenly portent began, Trishka would come. So the heavenly portent began. All the people poured out into the street, in the fields, waiting to see what would happen. Our place, you know, is open country. They look; and suddenly down the slope from the big village comes a man of some sort; such a strange man, with such a queer head that all scream, 'Oi, Trishka is coming! Oi, Trishka is coming!' and all run in all directions! Our elder crawled into a ditch; his wife stumbled on the gate and screamed with all her might; she terrified her yard dog so that he broke his chain, jumped over the fence and ran into the forest; and Kuzka's father, Dorofeyich, ran into the oats, lay down there, and began to cry like a quail. 'Perhaps,' says he, 'the Enemy, the Destroyer of Souls, will spare the birds, at least.' So they were all in such a scare! But he that was coming was our cooper Vavila; he had bought himself a new tub and had put the empty tub over his head."

All the boys laughed; and again there was a silence for a while, as often happens when people are talking in the open air. I looked out into the solemn, majestic stillness of the night; the dewy freshness of late evening had been succeeded by the dry warmth of midnight; the darkness still had long to lie in a soft curtain over the slumbering fields; there was still a long while left before the first whisperings, the first dewdrops of dawn. There was no moon in the heavens; it rose late at that time. Countless golden stars, twinkling in rivalry, seemed all floating softly towards the Milky Way, and truly, looking at them, you were almost conscious of the never-resting motion of the earth . . . A strange, harsh, painful cry sounded twice together over the river, and a few moments later, was repeated farther down . . .

Kostya shuddered. "What was that?"

"That was a heron's cry," replied Pavlusha tranquilly.

"A heron," repeated Kostya. "And what was it, Pavlusha, I heard yesterday evening?" he added, after a short pause. "Perhaps you will know."

"What did you hear?"

"I will tell you what I heard. I was going from Stony Ridge to Shashkino; I went first through our walnut wood, and then passed by a little pool—you know where there's a sharp turn down to the ravine—there is a water-pit there, you know; it is quite overgrown with reeds; so I went near this pit, brothers, and suddenly from it came a sound of someone groaning, and so piteously: oo-oo, oo-oo! I was in such a fright, brothers; it was late, and the voice was so miserable. I felt as if I could cry myself . . . What could that have been, eh?"

"It was in that pit the thieves drowned Akim the forester last summer," observed Pavlusha, "so perhaps it was his soul lamenting."

"Oh, dear, really, brothers," replied Kostya, opening wide his eyes, which were round enough before, "I did not know they had drowned Akim in that pit. I'd have been frightened even more if I'd known!"

"But they also say there are little, tiny frogs," continued Pavlusha, "who cry piteously like that."

"Frogs? Oh, no, it was not frogs, certainly not." (The heron again uttered a cry above the river.) "Ugh, just listen to it!" Kostya cried involuntarily. "It is just like a wood-spirit shrieking."

"The wood-spirit does not shriek, it is dumb," put in Ilyusha, "it only claps its hands and rattles."

"And have you seen it then, the wood-spirit?" Fedya asked him ironically.

"No, I have not seen it, and God preserve me from seeing it; but others have seen it. Why, the other day it fixed on a peasant in our parts, and led him through the woods in circles, and all around one and the same clearing . . . He scarcely got home by daylight."

"Well, and did he see it?"

"Yes. He says it was a big, big creature, dark, shapeless, as if it were standing behind a tree; you could not make it out well; it seemed to hide away from the moon, and kept staring and staring with its great eyes, and blinking and blinking them . . ."

"Ugh!" exclaimed Fedya with a slight shiver, and a shrug of the shoulders, "pfoo!"

"And how does such an unclean brood come to exist in the world," said Pavlusha, "it's a wonder."

"Don't speak ill of it; take care, it will hear you," said Ilyusha.

Again there was a silence.

"Look, look, lads," suddenly came Vanya's childish voice, "look at God's little stars; they are swarming like bees!"

He put his fresh face out from under his mat, leaned on his fist, and slowly lifted up his large soft eyes. The eyes of all the boys were raised to the sky, and they were not lowered quickly.

"Well, Vanya," asked Fedya kindly, "is your sister Anyutka well?"

"Yes, she is well," replied Vanya with a slight lisp.

"You ask her, why doesn't she come to see us?"

"I don't know."

"You tell her to come."

"Very well."

"Tell her I have a present for her."

"And for me, too?"

"Yes, you, too."

Vanya sighed.

"No; I don't want one. Better give it to her; she is so nice to us at home."

And Vanya laid his head down on the ground again. Pavlusha got up and took the empty pot in his hand.

"Where are you going?" Fedya asked him.

"To the river, to get water; I want a drink."

The dogs got up and followed him.

"Take care you don't fall into the river!" Ilyusha cried after him.

"Why should he fall in?" said Fedya. "He will be careful."

"Yes, he will be careful. But all kinds of things happen; he will stoop over, perhaps, to draw the water, and the water-spirit will clutch him by the hand, and drag him into the depths. Then they will say, 'The boy fell into the water.' Fell in, indeed!... There, he has gone in among the reeds," he added, listening.

The reeds certainly "shished", as they call it among us, as they were parted.

"But is it true," asked Kostya, "that Akulina has been mad ever since she fell into the water?"

"Yes, ever since . . . Look at her now! But they say she was a beauty before then. The water-spirit bewitched her. I suppose he did not expect they would get her out so soon. So down there at the bottom he bewitched her."

(I had met this Akulina more than once. Covered with rags, fearfully thin, with face as black as coal, blear-eyed and her teeth ever bared, she would stay whole hours in one place in the road, stamping with her feet, pressing her fleshless hands to her breast, and slowly shifting from one leg to the other, like a wild beast in a cage. She understood nothing that was said to her, and only chuckled spasmodically from time to time.)

"But they say," continued Kostya, "that Akulina threw herself into the river because her lover had deceived her."

"Yes, that was it."

"And do you remember Vasya?" added Kostya mournfully.

"What Vasya?" asked Fedya.

"Why, the one who was drowned," replied Kostya, "in this very river. Ah, what a boy he was! What a boy he was! His mother, Feklista, how she loved him, her Vasya! And she seemed to have a foreboding, Feklista did, that harm would come to him from the water. Sometimes, when Vasya went with us boys in the summer to bathe in the river, she used to be trembling all over. The other women did not mind; they passed by with the wash-tubs, and went on, but Feklista put her tub down on the ground, and set to calling him, 'Come back, come back, my little joy; come back, my darling!' And no one knows how he was drowned. He was playing on the bank, and his mother was there raking hay; suddenly she hears as though someone was blowing bubbles, and behold! there was only Vasya's little cap to be seen floating on the water. You know since then Feklista has not been right in her mind: she goes and lies down at the place where he was drowned; she lies down, brothers, and sings a song—you remember Vasya was always singing a song like that—so she sings it, too, and weeps and weeps, and bitterly complains to God."

"Here is Pavlusha coming," said Fedya.

Pavlusha came up to the fire with a full pot in his hand.

"Boys," he began after a short silence, "something bad's afoot."

"Oh, what?" asked Kostya hurriedly.

"I heard Vasya's voice."

They all seemed to shudder.

"What do you mean?" stammered Kostya.

"Really. I bent down to the water and suddenly I hear my name called in Vasya's voice, as though it came from below water, 'Pavlusha, Pavlusha, come here.' I came away. But I fetched the water, though."

"Ah, God have mercy upon us!" said the boys, crossing themselves.

"It was the water-spirit calling you, Pavlusha," said Fedya, "we were just talking of Vasya."

"Ah, it's a bad omen," said Ilyusha, deliberately.

"Well, never mind, don't bother about it," Pavlusha declared stoutly, and he sat down again. "No one can escape his fate."

The boys were still. It was clear that Pavlusha's words had produced a strong impression on them. They began to lie down before the fire as though preparing to go to sleep.

"What is that?" asked Kostya, suddenly lifting his head.

Pavlusha listened.

"It's the curlews flying and whistling."

"Where are they flying to?"

"To a land where, they say, there is no winter."

"But is there such a land?"

"Yes."

"Is it far away?"

"Far, far away, beyond the warm seas."

Kostya sighed and shut his eyes.

More than three hours had passed since I first came across the boys. The moon at last had risen; I did not notice it at first; it was such a tiny crescent. This moonless night was as solemn and hushed as it had been at first . . . But already many stars, that not long before had been high up in the heavens, were setting over the earth's dark rim; everything around was perfectly still, as it is only still towards morning; all was sleeping the deep unbroken sleep that comes before daybreak. Already the fragrance in the air was fainter; once more a dew seemed falling . . . How short are nights in summer! The boys' talk died down when the fires did. The dogs even were dozing; the horses, so far as I could make out in the faint, barely flickering light of the stars, were asleep with downcast heads . . . I fell into a state of weary drowsiness, which passed into sleep.

A fresh breeze passed over my face. I opened my eyes; the morning was beginning. The dawn had not yet flushed the sky, but already light was breaking in the east. Everything had become visible, though

dimly visible, around. The pale-grey sky was growing tight and cold and bluish; the stars dimmed and disappeared; the earth was wet, the leaves covered with dew, and from the distance came sounds of life and voices, and a faint morning breeze went fluttering over the earth. My body responded to it with a shiver of delight. I got up quickly and went to the boys. They were all sleeping like the dead round the smouldering fire; only Pavlusha half rose and gazed intently at me.

I nodded to him, and walked homewards beside the misty river. Before I had walked two versts, already all around me, over the wide dew-drenched meadow, and in front, from forest to forest, where the hills were showing green again, and behind, over the long dusty road and the sparkling bushes, flushed with the red glow, and over the river, faintly blue now under the lifting mist, flowed streams of young ardent light, first pink, then red and golden . . . All things began to stir, to awaken, to sing, to flutter, to speak. On all sides thick drops of dew sparkled in radiant diamonds; to welcome me, pure and clear as though bathed in the freshness of morning, came the notes of a bell, and suddenly there rushed by me, driven by the boys I had parted from, the drove of horses, refreshed and rested . . .

Sad to say, I must add that in that year Pavlusha met his end. He was not drowned; he was killed by a fall from his horse. Pity! He was a splendid fellow!

KASYAN OF FAIR SPRINGS

I was returning from hunting in a jolting little trap, and, overcome by the stifling heat of a cloudy summer day (it is well known that the heat is often more insupportable on such days than on bright days, especially when there is no wind), I dozed and was shaken about, resigning myself with sullen fortitude to being persecuted by the fine white dust which was incessantly raised from the beaten road by the warped and creaking wheels, when suddenly my attention was aroused by the extraordinary uneasiness and agitated movements of my coachman, who had till that instant been dozing soundly. He began tugging at the reins, moved uneasily on the box, and started shouting to the horses, staring all the while in one direction. I looked round. We were driving through a wide ploughed plain; low hills, also ploughed over, ran in gently, swelling waves over it; the eye took in some five versts of deserted country; in the distance the round-scolloped tree-tops of some small birch copses were the only objects to break the almost straight line of the horizon. Narrow paths ran over the fields, disappeared into the hollows, and wound round the hillocks. On one of these paths, which happened to run into our road five hundred paces ahead of us, I made out a kind of procession. At this my coachman was looking.

It was a funeral. In front, in a cart harnessed with one horse and advancing at a walking pace, came the priest; beside him sat the sexton driving; behind the cart four peasants, bareheaded, carried the coffin covered with a white cloth; two women followed the coffin. The shrill wailing voice of one of them suddenly reached my ears; I listened; she was intoning a dirge. Very dismal sounded this chanted, monotonous, hopelessly-sorrowful lament among the empty fields. The coachman whipped up the horses; he wanted to get in front of this procession. To meet a corpse on the road is a bad

omen. And he did succeed in galloping ahead before the funeral had had time to turn out of the path into the highroad; but we had hardly got a hundred paces beyond this point, when suddenly our trap jolted violently, heeled on one side and all but overturned. The coachman pulled up the horses, and spat with a disgusted gesture of his hand.

"What is it?" I asked.

My coachman got down without speaking or hurrying himself.

"But what is it?"

"The axle is broken," he replied gloomily, and he suddenly jerked at the collar on the off-side horse with such indignation that it heeled, but it stood its ground, snorted, shook itself, and tranquilly began to scratch its foreleg below the knee with its teeth.

I got out and stood for some time on the road, a prey to a vague and unpleasant feeling of helplessness. The right wheel was almost completely bent in under the trap, and it seemed to turn its centre-piece upwards in dumb despair.

"What are we to do now?" I said at last.

"That's what's the cause of it!" said my coachman, pointing with his whip to the funeral procession, which had just turned into the highroad and was approaching us. "I have always noticed that," he went on, "it's a true sign—meet a dead man—yes indeed."

And again he began worrying the off-side horse, who, seeing his ill-humour, resolved to remain perfectly quiet, and contented itself with discreetly switching its tail now and then. I walked up and down a little while, and then stopped again before the wheel.

Meanwhile the funeral had come up to us. Quietly turning off the road on to the grass, the mournful procession moved slowly past us. My coachman and I took off our caps, bowed to the priest, and exchanged glances with the bearers. They moved with difficulty under their burden, their broad chests standing out under the strain. Of the two women who followed the coffin, one was very old and pale; her set face terribly distorted as it was by grief, still kept an expression of grave and severe dignity. She walked in silence, from time to time lifting her wasted hand to her thin drawn lips. The other, a young woman of five-and-twenty or so, had her eyes red and moist and her whole face swollen with weeping; as she passed us she ceased wailing and hid her face in her sleeve... But when the funeral had got round us and was again on the road, her piteous, heart-piercing lament began again. My coachman followed the measured

swaying of the coffin with his eyes in silence. Then he turned to me.

"It's Martin the carpenter they're burying," he said; "Martin of Ryabaya."

"How do you know?"

"I know by the women. The old one is his mother, and the young one's his wife."

"Has he been ill then?"

"Yes... fever. The day before yesterday the bailiff sent for the doctor, but they did not find the doctor at home. He was a good carpenter; he drank a bit, but he was a good carpenter. See how upset his good woman is... But, there; women's tears don't cost much, you know. Women's tears are only water... yes, indeed."

And he bent down, crept under the side-horse's traces, and seized the shaft-bow with both hands.

"Still," I observed, "what are we going to do?"

My coachman just propped his knee against the shaft-horse's shoulder, twice gave the shaft-bow a shake, and straightened the pad; then he crept under the side-horse's traces again, and giving it a blow on the nose as he passed, went up to the wheel. He went up to it, and, never taking his eyes off it, slowly took from under the skirts of his coat a box, slowly pulled open its lid by a strap, slowly thrust into it his two fat fingers (which pretty well filled it up), rolled and rolled up some snuff, and creasing up his nose in anticipation, helped himself to it several times in succession, accompanying the snuff-taking every time by a prolonged grunting. Then, his streaming eyes blinking painfully, he relapsed into profound meditation.

"Well?" I said at last.

My coachman thrust his box carefully into his pocket, brought his hat forward on to his brows without the aid of his hand, by a movement of his head alone, and gloomily got up on the box.

"What are you doing?" I asked him, somewhat bewildered.

"Pray be seated," he replied calmly, picking up the reins.

"But how can we go on?"

"We will go on now."

"But the axle?"

"Pray be seated."

"But the axle is broken."

"It is broken; but we will get to the hamlet... at a walking pace,

of course. Over here, beyond the copse, on the right, is a hamlet; they call it Yudino."

"And do you think we can get there?"

My coachman did not vouchsafe me a reply.

"I had better walk," I said.

"As you like . . ." And he flourished his whip. The horses started.

We did succeed in getting to the hamlet, though the right front wheel was almost off, and turned in a very strange way. On one hillock it almost flew off, but my coachman shouted in a voice of exasperation, and we descended it in safety.

Yudino hamlet consisted of six little low-pitched huts, already lop-sided, though they had certainly not been put up long; the backyards of some of the huts were not even fenced in yet. As we drove into this hamlet we did not meet a single living soul; there were no chickens even to be seen in the street, and no dogs, except one black crop-tailed cur, which at our approach leaped hurriedly out of a perfectly dry and empty trough, to which it must have been driven by thirst, and at once, without barking, rushed headlong under a gate. I went up to the first hut, opened the door and called out. No one answered me. I called once more; the hungry mewing of a cat sounded behind the other door. I pushed it open with my foot; a thin cat ran past me, its green eyes glittering in the dark. I put my head into the room and looked round; it was empty, dark, and smoky. I returned to the yard, and there was no one there either . . . A calf lowed behind the paling; a lame grey goose waddled a little away. I passed on to the second hut. Not a soul in the second hut either. I went into the yard . . .

In the very middle of the yard, in the glaring sunlight, there lay, with his face on the ground and a cloak thrown over his head, a boy, as it seemed to me. In a thatched shed a few paces from him a thin little nag with broken harness was standing near a wretched little cart. The sunshine falling in streaks through the narrow cracks in the dilapidated roof striped his shaggy, reddish-brown coat in small bands of light. Above, in a bird-house nailed high up, starlings were chattering and looking down inquisitively from their airy home. I went up to the sleeping figure and shook him.

He lifted his head, saw me, and at once jumped up on to his feet . . .

"What? What do you want? What is it?" he muttered, half asleep.

I did not answer him at once; I was so staggered by his appearance.

Picture to yourself a little creature of fifty years old, with a little round wrinkled face, a sharp nose, little, scarcely visible brown eyes, and thick curly black hair, which stood out on his tiny head like the cap on the top of a mushroom. His whole person was excessively thin and weakly, and it is absolutely impossible to translate into words the extraordinary strangeness of his expression.

"What do you want?" he asked me again. I explained to him what was the matter; he listened, slowly blinking, without taking his eyes off me.

"So cannot we get a new axle?" I said finally. "I will gladly pay for it."

"But who are you? Hunters, eh?" he asked, scanning me from head to foot.

"Hunters."

"You shoot the fowls of heaven, I suppose? . . . The wild things of the woods? . . . And is it not a sin to kill God's birds, to shed the innocent blood?"

The strange old man spoke in a sing-song voice. The sound of his voice also astonished me. There was none of the weakness of age to be heard in it; it was marvellously sweet, young and almost feminine in its softness.

"I have no axle," he added after a brief silence. "That thing will not suit you." He pointed to his cart. "You have, I expect, a large trap."

"But can I get one in the village?"

"Not much of a village here! No one has an axle . . . And there is no one at home anyway; they are all at work. You will have to go," he announced suddenly and lay down again on the ground.

I had not at all expected this conclusion.

"Listen, old man," I said, touching him on the shoulder, "do me a kindness, help me."

"Go, in God's name! I am tired; I've been driving into town," he said, and drew his cloak over his head.

"But pray do me a kindness," I said. "I . . . I will pay for it."

"I don't want your money."

"But please, old man."

He half raised himself and sat up, crossing his thin legs.

"I could take you perhaps to the clearing. Some merchants have bought the forest here—God be their judge! They are cutting down

the forest, and they have built a counting-house there—God be their judge! You might order an axle of them there, or buy one ready-made.”

“Splendid!” I cried delighted. “Splendid! Let us go.”

“An oak axle, a good one,” he continued, not getting up from his place.

“And is it far to this clearing?”

“Three versts.”

“Come, then! We can drive there in your trap.”

“Oh, no...”

“Come, let us go,” I said, “let us go, old man! The coachman is waiting for us in the road.”

The old man rose unwillingly and followed me into the street. We found my coachman in an irritable frame of mind; he had tried to water his horses, but the water in the well, it appeared, was scanty in quantity and bad in taste, and water is the first consideration with coachmen. However, he grinned at the sight of the old man, nodded his head and cried, “Hallo, Kasyan! Good health to you!”

“Good health to you, Erofei, upright man!” replied Kasyan in a dejected voice.

I at once made known his suggestion to the coachman; Erofei expressed his approval of it and drove into the yard. While he was busy unharnessing the horses, the old man stood leaning with his shoulders against the gate and looking disconsolately first at him and then at me. He seemed in some uncertainty of mind; he was not very pleased, as it seemed to me, at our sudden visit.

“So they have made you settle here too?” Erofei asked him suddenly, lifting the wooden shaft-bow.

“Yes.”

“Ugh!” said my coachman between his teeth. “You know Martin the carpenter... Of course, you know Martin of Ryabaya?”

“Yes.”

“Well, he is dead. We have just met his coffin.”

Kasyan shuddered.

“Dead?” he said, and his head sank dejectedly.

“Yes, he is dead. Why didn’t you cure him, eh? They say you cure folks; you’re a quack.”

My coachman was apparently laughing and jeering at the old man.

"And is this your trap, pray?" he added, with a shrug of his shoulders in its direction.

"Yes."

"Well, a fine trap this!" he said, and taking it by the shafts, almost turned it completely upside down. "A trap! . . . But what will you drive in to the clearing? You can't harness our horses in these shafts; our horses are all too big."

"I don't know," replied Kasyan, "what you are going to drive; that beast perhaps," he added with sigh.

"That?" broke in Erofei, and going up to Kasyan's nag, he poked it disparagingly in the neck with the third finger of his right hand. "See," he added contemptuously, "it's asleep, the scarecrow!"

I asked Erofei to harness it as quickly as he could. I wanted to drive myself with Kasyan to the clearing; grouse are fond of such places. When the little cart was quite ready, and I, together with my dog, had been installed in its warped wicker body, and Kasyan, huddled up into a little ball, with still the same dejected expression on his face, had taken his seat in front, Erofei came up to me and whispered with an air of mystery:

"You did well, your honour, to drive with him. He is such a queer fellow; he's cracked, you know, and his nickname is the Flea. I don't know how you managed to make him out . . ."

I tried to say to Erofei that so far Kasyan had seemed to me a very sensible man; but my coachman continued at once in the same voice:

"But you keep a look-out where he is driving you. And, your honour, be pleased to choose the axle yourself; be pleased to choose a sound one . . . Well, Flea," he added aloud, "could I get a bit of bread in your house?"

"Look about; you may find some," answered Kasyan. He pulled the reins and we rolled away.

His little horse, to my genuine astonishment, trotted quite briskly. Kasyan preserved an obstinate silence the whole way, and made abrupt and unwilling answers to my questions. We quickly reached the clearing, and then made our way to the counting-house, a lofty cottage standing by itself over a small gully, which had been dammed up and converted into a pool. In this counting-house I found two young merchants' clerks, with snow-white teeth, sweet eyes, sweet and subtle words, and sweet and wily smiles. I bought an axle of them and returned to the clearing. I thought that Kasyan would

stay with the horse and await my return; but he suddenly came up to me.

"Are you going to shoot birds, eh?" he said.

"Yes, if I come across any."

"I will come with you . . . May I?"

"Certainly, certainly."

So we went together. The land cleared was about a verst in length. I must confess I watched Kasyan more than my dog. He had been aptly nick-named. His little black uncovered head (though his hair, indeed, was as good a covering as any cap) seemed to flash hither and thither among the bushes. He walked very nimbly, and seemed always hopping up and down as he moved; he was for ever stooping down to pick herbs of some kind, thrusting them into his bosom, muttering to himself, and constantly looking at me and my dog with a strange searching gaze. Among low bushes and in clearings there are often little grey birds which constantly flit from tree to tree, and which whistle as they dart here and there. Kasyan mimicked them, answered their calls; a young quail flew from under his feet, chirruping, and he chirruped in imitation of him; a lark began to descend above him, moving his wings and singing melodiously; Kasyan joined in his song. He did not speak to me at all.

The weather was glorious, even more so than before; but the heat was no less. High in the clear sky the high scanty clouds floated slowly, yellowish-white, like snow lying late in spring, flat and elongated out like limp sails. Slowly but perceptibly their fringed edges, soft and fluffy as cotton-wool, changed at every moment; they were melting away, even these clouds, and no shadow fell from them. I strolled about the clearing for a long while with Kasyan. Young shoots, which had not yet had time to grow more than a yard high, surrounded the low blackened stumps with their smooth slender stems; and spongy funguses with grey edges—the same of which they make tinder—clung to these stumps; strawberry plants flung their rosy tendrills over them; mushrooms squatted in close groups. The feet were constantly caught and entangled in the long grass that was parched in the scorching sun; the eyes were dazzled on all sides by the glaring metallic glitter of the young reddish leaves of the trees; on all sides were the blue clusters of vetch, the golden cups of luttercups, and the half-lilac, half-yellow blossoms of the cow-wheat. In some places near the disused paths, on which the tracks of wheels were marked by streaks on fine reddish grass, rose piles of wood,

blackened by wind and rain, laid in two-yard-lengths; there was a faint shadow cast from them in slanting oblongs; there was no other shade anywhere. A light breeze rose, then sank again; suddenly it would blow straight in the face and seem to be rising; everything would begin to rustle merrily, to nod, to shake around one; the supple tops of the ferns would bow down gracefully, and one rejoices in it, but at once it dies away again, and all was at rest once more. Only the grasshoppers chirruped in chorus with frenzied energy, and wearisome is this unceasing, sharp, dry sound. It is in keeping with the persistent heat of midday; it seems to be born of it, as though evoked by it out of the glowing earth.

Without having started one single covey we at last reached another clearing. There the aspen-trees had only lately been felled, and lay stretched mournfully on the ground, crushing the grass and small undergrowth below them; on some the leaves were still green, though they were already dead, and hung limply from the motionless branches; on others they were crumpled and dried up. Fresh golden-white chips lay in heaps round the stumps that were brightly fresh; a peculiar, very pleasant pungent odour rose from them. Farther away, nearer the wood, sounded the dull blows of axes, and from time to time, bowing and spreading wide its arms, a bushy tree fell slowly and majestically to the ground.

For a long time I did not come upon a single bird; at last a corn-crake flew out of a thick clump of young oaks overgrown with wormwood. I fired; it turned over in the air and fell. At the sound of the shot, Kasyan quickly covered his eyes with his hand, and he did not stir till I had reloaded the gun and picked up the bird. When I had moved farther on, he went up to the place where the wounded bird had fallen, bent down to the grass, on which some drops of blood were sprinkled, shook his head, and looked in dismay at me . . . I heard him afterwards whispering, "A sin! . . . Ah, yes, it's a sin!"

The heat forced us at last to go into the wood. I flung myself down under a high hazel bush, over which a slender young maple gracefully stretched its light branches. Kasyan sat down on the thick trunk of a felled birch-tree. I looked at him. The leaves faintly stirred overhead, and their thin greenish shadows crept softly to and fro over his puny body, wrapped in a dark coat, and over his little face. He did not lift his head. Bored by his silence, I lay on my back and began to admire the tranquil play of the tangled foliage on the background of the bright, far-away sky. A marvellously sweet occupation it is

to lie on your back in a wood and gaze upwards! You may fancy you are looking into a bottomless sea; that it stretches wide *below* you; that the trees are not rising out of the earth, but, like the roots of gigantic weeds, are dropping—falling straight down into those glassy, limpid depths; the leaves on the trees are at one moment transparent as emeralds, the next, they condense into dark-golden, almost black green. Somewhere, far off, at the end of a slender twig, a single leaf hangs motionless against the blue patch of transparent sky, and beside it another bobs with the motion of a fish on the line, as though moving of its own will, not shaken by the wind. Round white clouds float calmly across, and calmly pass away like submarine islands; and suddenly, all this ocean, this shining ether, these branches and leaves steeped in sunlight—all is rippling, quivering in fleeting brilliance, and a fresh trembling whisper awakens like the tiny, incessant splash of suddenly stirred ripples. One does not move—one looks, and no words can tell what peace, what joy, what sweetness fills the heart. One looks: the deep, pure blue stirs on one's lips a smile, innocent as itself, as the clouds over the sky, and with them, happy memories pass in slow procession through the soul, and you fancy your gaze goes deeper and deeper, and draws you with it up into that peaceful, shining immensity, and that you cannot be brought back from that height, that depth...

"Master, master!" cried Kasyan suddenly in his musical voice.

I raised myself in surprise: up till then he had scarcely replied to my questions, and now he suddenly addressed me of himself.

"What is it?" I asked.

"What did you kill the bird for?" he began, looking me straight in the face.

"What for? Corn-crake is game; one can eat it."

"That was not what you killed it for, master, as though you were going to eat it! You killed it for amusement."

"Well, you yourself, I suppose, eat geese or chickens?"

"Those birds are provided by God for man, but the corn-crake is a free bird of the woods; and not he alone; many they are, the wild things of the woods and the fields, and the wild things of the rivers and marshes and moors, flying on high or walking below; and a sin it is to slay them; let them live their allotted life upon the earth. But for man another food has been provided; his food is other, and other his drink: bread, the good gift of God, and the water of heaven, and

the tame beasts that have come down to us from our fathers of old."

I looked in astonishment at Kasyan. His words flowed freely; he did not hesitate for a word; he spoke with quiet inspiration and gentle dignity, sometimes closing his eyes.

"Is it sinful, then, to kill fish, too, according to you?" I asked.

"Fishes have cold blood," he replied with conviction. "The fish is a dumb creature; it knows neither fear nor rejoicing. The fish is a voiceless creature. The fish does not feel; the blood in it is not living... Blood," he continued after a pause, "blood is a holy thing! God's sun does not look upon blood; it is hidden away from the light... it is a great sin to bring blood into the light of day; a great sin and horror... Ah, a great sin!"

He sighed, and his head drooped. I looked, I confess, in absolute amazement at the strange old man. His language did not sound like the language of a peasant; the common people do not speak like that, nor do those who aim at fine speaking. His speech was deliberately solemn and curious... I had never heard anything like it.

"Tell me, please, Kasyan," I began, without taking my eyes off his slightly flushed face, "what is your occupation?"

He did not answer my question at once. His eyes strayed uneasily for an instant.

"I live as the Lord commands," he brought out at last, "and as for occupation—no, I have no occupation. I've never been very clever from a child; I work when I can; I'm not much of a workman—how could I be? I have no health; my hands are awkward. But in spring I catch nightingales."

"You catch nightingales?... But didn't you tell me that we must not touch any of the wild things of the woods and the fields, and so on?"

"We must not kill them, of a certainty; death will take its own without that. Look at Martin the carpenter; Martin lived, and his life was not long and now he is dead; his wife grieves for her husband, for her little children... Neither for man nor beast is there any charm against death. Death does not hasten, nor is there any escaping it; but we must not aid death... And I do not kill nightingales—God forbid! I do not catch them to harm them, to spoil their lives, but for the pleasure of men, for their comfort and delight."

"Do you go to Kursk to catch them?"

"Yes, I go to Kursk, and farther, too, at times. I pass nights in the

marshes, or at the edge of the forests; I am alone at night in the fields; there the curlews call, there the hares squeak, or the wild ducks lift up their voices . . . I note them at evening; at morning I give ear to them; at daybreak I cast my net over the bushes . . . There are night-ingales that sing so pitifully sweet . . . yea, pitifully."

"And do you sell them?"

"I give them to good people."

"And what else do you do?"

"What do I do?"

"Yes, how are you employed?"

The old man was silent for a little.

"I am not employed at all . . . I am a poor workman. But I can read and write."

"You can read?"

"Yes, I can read and write. I learnt, by the help of God and good people."

"Have you a family?"

"No, no family."

"How so? . . . Are they dead, then?"

"No, but . . . I have not been lucky in life. But all that is in God's hands; we are all in God's hands; and a man should be righteous—that is all! Upright before God, that is it."

"And you have no kin?"

"Yes . . . well . . ."

The old man was confused.

"Tell me, please," I began. "I heard my coachman ask you why you did not cure Martin. You cure disease?"

"Your coachman is a righteous man," Kasyan answered thoughtfully, "but not without sin either. They call me a quack. Me a quack, indeed! And who can heal the sick? That is all a gift from God. But there are . . . yes, there are herbs, and there are flowers; they are of use, of a certainty. There is plaintain, for instance, a herb good for man; there is marigold too; it is not sinful to speak of them: they are holy herbs of God. Then there are others—not so; they may be of use, but it's a sin; and to speak of them is a sin. Still, with prayer, maybe . . . And there are special words of course . . . But who has faith, shall be saved," he added, dropping his voice.

"You did not give Martin anything?" I asked.

"I heard of it too late," replied the old man. "But what of it! Each man's destiny is written from his birth. The carpenter Martin was not

to live; he was not to live upon the earth; that was how it was. No, when a man is not to live on the earth, the sunshine does not warm him like another, and the bread does not nourish him and make strong; it is as though something is drawing him away . . . Yes; God rest his soul!"

"Have you been settled long amongst us?" I asked him after a short pause.

Kasyan started.

"No, not long; about four years. In the old master's time we always lived in our old houses, but the trustees made us settle here. Our old master was a kind heart, a man of peace—the Kingdom of Heaven be his! The trustees doubtless judged righteously."

"And where did you live before?"

"At Fair Springs."

"Is it far from here?"

"A hundred versts."

"Well, were you better off there?"

"Yes . . . yes, there, there was open country, with rivers; it was our home; here we are cramped and parched up . . . Here we are miserable. There, at home, at Fair Springs, you could get up on to a hill—and ah, my God, what a sight you could see! Streams and meadows and forests, and there was a church, and then came more meadows beyond. You could see far, very far. Yes, how far you could see—you could look and look, oh, my! Here, doubtless, the soil is better; it is clay—good fat clay, the peasants say; me, I don't need much corn."

"Tell me, old man, wouldn't you like to visit your birthplace again?"

"Yes, I should like to see it. Still, all places are good. I am a man without kin, a restless man. And, after all, do you gain much, pray, by staying at home? But, behold! as you walk, and as you walk," he went on, raising his voice, "the heart grows lighter, of a truth. And the sun shines upon you, and you are in the sight of God, and the singing comes more tunefully. Here, you see a herb growing; you note it—you pick it. Here water runs, perhaps—spring water, a source of pure holy water; so you drink of it—you note it, too. The birds of heaven sing . . . And beyond Kursk come the steppes, that steppe-country; ah, what a marvel, what a delight for man! What freedom, what a blessing of God! And they go on, folks tell, even to the warm seas where dwells the sweet-voiced bird, the Hamayune, and from

the trees the leaves fall not, neither in autumn nor in winter, and apples grow of gold, on silver branches, and every man lives in uprightness and content. I would like to go there . . . Have I journeyed no little already! I have been to Romni and to Simbirsk the fair city, and even to Moscow of the golden cupolas; I have been to the Oka the provider and to the Tsna the sweetheart, and to our mother the Volga, and many folks, good Christians, have I seen, and noble cities have I visited . . . Well, I would go thither . . . yes . . . and so . . . and I am not the only one, poor sinner, . . . many other Christians go in bast shoes, roaming over the world, seeking truth, yes! . . . For what is there at home? No righteousness in man—that's what".

These last words Kasyan uttered quickly, almost inarticulately; then he said something more which I could not catch at all, and such a strange expression passed over his face that I involuntarily recalled the epithet "queer". He looked down, cleared his throat, and seemed to come to himself again.

"The sun is shining so nicely," he murmured in a low voice. "It is a blessing, oh, Lord! How warm it's in the woods!"

He gave a movement of the shoulders and fell into silence. After a while with a vague look round him he began softly to sing. I could not catch all the words of his slow chant; I heard the following:

*They call me Kasyan,
But my nickname's the Flea.*

"Oh!" I thought, "so he improvises." Suddenly he started and ceased singing, looking intently at the thicket. I turned and saw a little peasant girl, about eight years old, in a blue frock, with a checked kerchief over her head, and a woven bark basket in her bare sunburnt hand. She had certainly not expected to meet us; she had, as they say, stumbled upon us, and she stood motionless in a shady recess among the thick foliage of the hazel-trees, looking dismayed at me with her black eyes. I had scarcely time to catch a glimpse of her; she dived behind a tree.

"Annushka! Annushka! Come here, don't be afraid!" cried the old man caressingly.

"I'm afraid," came her thin voice.

"Don't be afraid, don't be afraid; come to me."

Annushka left her hiding place in silence, walked softly round—her little feet scarcely made any sound on the thick grass—and came out of the bushes near the old man. She was not a child of eight, as I had

fancied at first from her diminutive stature, but a girl of thirteen or fourteen. Her whole person was small and thin, but very neat and graceful, and her pretty little face was strikingly like Kasyan's own, though he was certainly not handsome. There were the same thin features, and the same strange expression, shy and confiding, melancholy and shrewd, and her movements were the same . . . Kasyan kept his eyes fixed on her; she stood sideways to him.

"Well, have you been picking mushrooms?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered with a shy smile.

"Did you find many?"

"Yes." (She stole a swift look at him and smiled again.)

"Are there white ones?"

"Yes."

"Show me, show me . . ." (She slipped the basket off her arm and half lifted the big burdock leaf which covered up the mushrooms.) "Ah!" said Kasyan, bending down over the basket. "What splendid ones! Well done, Annushka!"

"Is she your daughter, Kasyan?" I asked. (Annushka's face flushed faintly.)

"No, a relative," replied Kasyan with affected indifference. "Come, Annushka, run along," he added at once, "run along, and God be with you! And take care."

"But why should she go on foot?" I interrupted. "We could take her with us."

Annushka blushed like a poppy, grasped the rope handle of her basket with both hands, and looked in trepidation at the old man.

"No, she will get there all right," he answered in the same languid and indifferent voice. "Why not? . . . She will get there . . . Run along."

Annushka went rapidly away into the forest. Kasyan looked after her, then looked down and smiled to himself. In this prolonged smile, in the few words he had spoken to Annushka, and in the very sound of his voice when he spoke to her, there was an intense, indescribable love and tenderness. He looked again in the direction she had gone, again smiled to himself, and, passing his hand across his face, nodded his head several times.

"Why did you send her away so soon?" I asked him. "I would have bought her mushrooms."

"Well, you can buy them there at home just the same, sir, if you

like," he answered, for the first time using the formal "sir" in addressing me.

"She's very pretty, your girl."

"No . . . only so-so," he answered with seeming reluctance, and from that instant he relapsed into the same uncommunicative mood as at first.

Seeing that all my efforts to make him talk again were fruitless, I went off into the clearing. Meantime the heat had somewhat abated; but my ill-success continued, and I returned to the hamlet with nothing but the one corn-crake and the new axle. Just as we were driving into the yard, Kasyan suddenly turned to me.

"Master, master," he began, "do you know I have done you a wrong; it was I cast a spell to keep all the game off."

"How so?"

"Oh, I can do that. Here you have a well-trained dog and a good one, but he could do nothing. When you think of it, what are men? What are they? Here's a beast; what have they made of him?"

It would have been useless for me to try to convince Kasyan of the impossibility of "casting a spell" on game, and so I made him no reply. Meantime we had turned into the yard.

Annushka was not in the hut: but she had been there before us and left her basket of mushrooms. Erofei fitted in the new axle, first exposing it to a severe and most unjust criticism; and an hour later I set off, leaving a small sum of money with Kasyan, which at first he was unwilling to accept, but afterwards, after a moment's thought as he held it in his hand, he put it in his bosom. In the course of this hour he had scarcely uttered a single word; he stood as before, leaning against the gate. He made no reply to the reproaches of my coachman, and took leave very coldly of me.

Directly I had come back, I could see that my worthy Erofei was in a gloomy frame of mind . . . To be sure, he had found nothing to eat in the village; the water for his horses was bad. We drove off. With dissatisfaction expressed even in the back of his head, he sat on the box, burning to begin to talk to me. While waiting for me to begin by some question, he confined himself to a low muttering in an undertone, and some rather caustic instructions to the horses. "A village," he muttered, "call that a village? You ask for a drop of kvass—not a drop of kvass even. Ah, Lord! . . . And the water—simply fish!" (He spat loudly.) "Not a cucumber, nor kvass, nor nothing . . .

Now, then," he added aloud, turning to the right trace-horse, "I know you, you humbug. You like to loaf." (And he gave him a cut with the whip.) "That horse has learnt to shirk his work entirely, and yet he was a willing beast once. Now, then—look alive!"

"Tell me, please, Erofei," I began, "what sort of a man is Kasyan?"

Erofei did not answer me at once: he was, in general, a reflective and deliberate fellow; but I could see directly that my question was soothing and cheering to him.

"The Flea?" he said at last, gathering up the reins. "He's a queer fellow; yes, a crazy chap; such a queer fellow, you wouldn't find another like him in a hurry. You know, for example, he's for all the world like our roan horse here; he shirks everything—out of work, that's to say. But then, what sort of workman could he be? . . . He's hardly body enough to keep his soul in . . . but still, of course . . . He's been like that from a child up, you know. At first he followed his uncles' business as a carrier—they went with troikas, you know; but then he got tired of it and threw it up. He began to live at home, but he could not keep at home long; he's so restless—a regular flea, indeed. He happened, by good luck, to have a kind master—he didn't worry him. Well, so ever since he has been wandering about like a lost sheep. And then, he's so strange; there's no understanding him. Sometimes he'll be as silent as a post, and then he'll begin talking, and God knows what he'll say! Is that a proper way to behave, pray? He's an absurd fellow, that he is. But he sings well, for all that. He sings real nice."

"And does he cure people, really?"

"Cure people! How could he? A fine sort of doctor! Though he did cure me of the king's evil, I must own . . . But how can he? He's a stupid fellow, that's what he is," he added after a moment's pause.

"Have you known him long?"

"A long while. I was his neighbour at Sichovka up at Fair Springs."

"And what of that girl—we met her in the wood, Annushka—what relation is she to him?"

Erofei looked at me over his shoulder and grinned all over his face.

"He, he! . . . yes, a relation. She is an orphan; she has no mother, and it's not even known who her mother was. But she must be a

relation; she's too much like him. Anyway, she lives with him. She's a smart girl, there's no denying; a good girl; and as for the old man, she's simply the apple of his eye; she's a good girl. And, do you know, you wouldn't believe it, but do you know, he'll probably start teaching Annushka to read. Well, well! That's quite like him; he's such an extraordinary fellow, such a changeable fellow; there's no reckoning on him, really . . . Eh! eh! eh!" my coachman suddenly interrupted himself, and stopping the horses, he bent over on one side and began sniffing. "Isn't there a smell of burning? Yes! Why, that new axle, I do declare! . . . I thought I'd greased it . . . We must get on to some water; why, here is a puddle, just right."

And Erofei slowly got off his seat, untied the pail, went to the pool, and coming back, listened with a certain satisfaction to the hissing of the box of the wheel as the water suddenly touched it . . . Six times during some ten versts he had to pour water on the smouldering axle, and it was quite evening when we got home at last.

THE STEWARD

Some fifteen versts from my place lives an acquaintance of mine, a landowner and a retired officer in the Guards—Arkady Pavlich Penochkin. He has a great deal of game on his estate, his house was built after the design of a French architect, and his servants are dressed after the English fashion; he gives capital dinners, and a cordial reception to visitors, and, with all that, one goes to see him reluctantly. He is a sensible and practical man, has received an excellent education, has been in the service, mixed in the highest society, and is now devoting himself to his estate with great success. Arkady Pavlich is, to judge by his own words, severe but just; he looks after the good of his subjects and punishes them—for their good. "One has to treat them like children," he says on such occasions. "Their ignorance, *mon cher*; *il faut prendre cela en considération*." When this so-called painful necessity arises, he eschews all sharp or violent gestures, and prefers not to raise his voice, but with a straight blow in the culprit's face, says calmly, "I believe I asked you to do something, my friend?" or "What is the matter, my boy? What are you thinking about?" while he sets his teeth a little, and the corners of his mouth are drawn. He is not tall, but has an elegant figure, and is quite good-looking; his hands and nails are kept perfectly exquisite; his rosy cheeks and lips are simply the picture of health. He has a ringing, light-hearted laugh, and there is sometimes a very genial twinkle in his clear brown eyes. He dresses in excellent taste; he orders French books, prints, and papers, though he's no great lover of reading himself: he has hardly as much as waded through the *Wandering Jew*. He plays cards in masterly style. Altogether, Arkady Pavlich is reckoned one of the most cultivated gentlemen and most eligible matches in our gubernia; the ladies think the world of him, and especially admire his manners. He has an

excellent deportment, is wary as a cat, and has never from his cradle been mixed up in any scandal, though he is fond of making his power felt, of intimidating or snubbing a nervous man, when he gets a chance. He has a positive distaste for doubtful society—he is afraid of compromising himself; in his lighter moments, however, he will avow himself a follower of Epicurus, though as a rule he speaks slightly of philosophy, calling it foggy food fit for German brains or, at times, simply rot. He is fond of music, too; at the card-table he is given to humming through his teeth, but with feeling; he knows by heart some snatches from *Lucia* and *La Somnambula*, but he is always apt to sing everything a little sharp. The winters he spends in St. Petersburg. His house is kept in extraordinarily good order; the very grooms feel his influence, and every day not only rub the harness and brush their coats, but even wash their faces. Arkady Pavlich's house-serfs have, it is true, something of a hang-dog look; but among us Russians there's no knowing what is sullenness and what is sleepiness. Arkady Pavlich speaks in a soft, agreeable voice, with emphasis and, as it were, bringing out each word through his handsome perfumed moustaches pleasurably; he uses a good many French expressions too, such as: *Mais c'est impayable! Mais comment donc!* and so on. For all that, I, for one, am never over-eager to visit him, and if it were not for the grouse and the partridges, I should probably have dropped his acquaintance altogether. One is possessed by a strange sort of uneasiness in his house; the very comfort is distasteful to one, and every evening when a befrizzed valet makes his appearance in a blue livery with heraldic buttons, and begins, with cringing servility, drawing off your boots, one feels that if his pale, lean figure could suddenly be replaced by the amazingly broad cheeks and incredibly thick nose of a stalwart youth fresh from the plough, who has yet had time in his few weeks of service to tear his new nankeen coat open at every seam, you would be unutterably overjoyed, and would gladly run the risk of having your whole leg pulled off with the boot...

In spite of my dislike for Arkady Pavlich, I once happened to pass a night in his house. The next day I ordered my carriage to be ready early in the morning, but he would not let me start without a regular breakfast in the English style, and conducted me into his study. With our tea they served us cutlets, boiled eggs, butter, honey, cheese, and so on. Two footmen in clean white gloves swiftly and silently anticipated our faintest desires. We sat on a Persian divan. Arkady Pavlich

was arrayed in loose silk trousers, a black velvet smoking jacket, a red fez with a blue tassel, and yellow Chinese slippers without heels. He drank his tea, laughed, scrutinised his finger-nails, smoked, propped himself up with cushions, and was altogether in an excellent humour. After making a hearty breakfast with obvious satisfaction, Arkady Pavlich poured himself out a glass of red wine, lifted it to his lips, and suddenly frowned.

"Why was not the wine warmed?" he asked rather sharply of one of the footmen.

The footman stood stock-still in confusion, and turned white.

"Didn't I ask you a question, my friend?" Arkady Pavlich resumed tranquilly, never taking his eyes off the man.

The luckless footman fidgeted in his place, twisted the napkin, and uttered not a word. Arkady Pavlich dropped his head and looked up at him thoughtfully from under his eyelids.

"*Pardon, mon cher,*" he observed, touching my knee amicably, and again he stared at the footman. "You can go," he added after a short silence, raising his eyebrows, and he rang the bell.

A stout, swarthy, black-haired man, with a low forehead and eyes positively lost in fat, came into the room.

"About Fyodor... make the necessary arrangements," said Arkady Pavlich in an undertone, and with complete composure.

"Yes, sir," answered the fat man, and he went out.

"*Voilà, mon cher, les désagréments de la campagne,*" Arkady Pavlich remarked gaily. "But where are you off to? Stop, you must stay a little."

"No," I answered, "it's time I was off."

"Nothing but sport! Oh, you sportsmen! And where are you going to shoot just now?"

"Forty versts from here, at Ryabovo."

"Ryabovo? By Jove! Now in that case I will come with you. Ryabovo's only five versts from my village Shipilovka, and it's a long while since I've been over to Shipilovka; I've never been able to get the time. Well, this is a piece of luck; you can spend the day shooting in Ryabovo and come on in the evening to me. *Ce sera charmant.* We'll have supper together—we'll take the cook with us, and you'll stay the night with me. Capital! Capital!" he added without waiting for my answer. "*C'est arrangé...* Hey, you there! Have the carriage brought out, and look sharp. You have never been in Shipilovka? I should be ashamed to suggest your putting up for the night in my

steward's cottage, but you're not particular, I know, and at Ryabovo you'd have slept in some hayloft . . . We will go, we will go!"

And Arkady Pavlich hummed some French song.

"You don't know, I dare say," he pursued, swaying from side to side. "My peasants there pay rent. It's the custom of the place—what was I to do? They pay their rent very punctually, though. I should, I'll own, have put them back to payment in labour, but there's so little land. I really wonder how they manage to make both ends meet. However, *c'est leur affaire*. My steward there's a fine fellow, *une forte tête*, a man of real administrative power! You shall see . . . Really, how luckily things have turned out!"

There was no help for it. Instead of nine o'clock in the morning, we started at two in the afternoon. Hunters will sympathise with my impatience. Arkady Pavlich liked, as he expressed it, to be comfortable when he had the chance, and he took with him a supply of linen, dainties, wearing apparel, perfumes, cushions, and dressing-cases of all sorts that a careful and thrifty German would have found enough to last him for a year. Every time we went down a steep hill, Arkady Pavlich addressed some brief but powerful remarks to the coachman, from which I was able to deduce that my worthy friend was a thorough coward. The journey was, however, performed in safety, except that, in crossing a lately-repaired bridge, the trap with the cook in it broke down, and he got squeezed in the stomach against the hind wheel.

Arkady Pavlich was alarmed at the sight of the fall of his home-made professor of the culinary art, and he sent at once to inquire whether his hands were injured. On receiving a reassuring reply to this query, his mind was set at rest immediately. With all this, we were rather a long time on the road; I was in the same carriage as Arkady Pavlich, and towards the end of the journey I was a prey to deadly boredom, especially as in a few hours my companion ran perfectly dry of subjects of conversation, and even fell to expressing liberal views on politics. At last we did arrive—not at Ryabovo, but at Shipilovka; it happened so somehow. It was too late to go shooting that day in any case, and so, raging inwardly, I submitted to my fate.

The cook had arrived a few minutes before us, and apparently had had time to arrange things and prepare those whom it concerned, for on our very entrance within the village boundaries we were met by the village bailiff (the steward's son), a stalwart, red-haired peasant

of all of seven feet; he was on horseback, bareheaded, and wearing a new overcoat, not buttoned up. "And where's Sofron?" Arkady Pavlich asked him. The bailiff first jumped nimbly off his horse, bowed low to his master and said, "Good health to you, Arkady Pavlich, sir!" then raised his head, shook himself, and announced that Sofron had gone to Perov, but they had sent after him.

"Well, come along," said Arkady Pavlich. The bailiff deferentially led his horse to one side, clambered on to it, and followed the carriage at a trot, his cap in his hand. We drove through the village. A few peasants in empty carts happened to meet us; they were driving from the threshing-floor and singing songs, swaying backwards and forwards, and swinging their legs in the air; but at the sight of our carriage and the bailiff they were suddenly silent, took off their winter caps (it was summertime) and straightened up as though waiting orders. Arkady Pavlich nodded to them graciously. A flutter of excitement had obviously spread through the village. Peasant women in check petticoats flung splinters of wood at indiscreet or over-zealous dogs; an old lame man with a beard that began just under his eyes pulled a horse away from the well before it had drunk its fill, gave it, for some obscure reason, a blow on the side, and then bowed low. Boys in long shirts ran with a howl to the huts, flung themselves on their bellies on the high thresholds, with their heads down and legs in the air, rolled over with the utmost haste into the dark outer rooms, from which they did not reappear again. Even the chickens sped in a hurried scuttle into the yards; one bold cock with a black throat like a satin waistcoat and a red tail, curving up to his very comb, stood his ground in the road, and even prepared for a crow, then suddenly took fright and scuttled off, too. The steward's cottage stood apart from the rest in the middle of a thick green patch of hemp. We stopped at the gates. Mr. Penochkin got up, flung off his cloak with a picturesque motion, and got out of the carriage, looking affably about him. The steward's wife met us with low bows, and came up to kiss the master's hand. Arkady Pavlich let her kiss it to her heart's content, and mounted the steps. In the outer room, in a dark corner, stood the bailiff's wife, and she too bowed, but did not venture to approach his hand. In the cold hut, as it is called—to the right of the outerroom—two other women were still busily at work; they were carrying out all the rubbish, empty tubs, sheepskins stiff as boards, greasy pots, a cradle with a heap of rags and a baby covered with spots, and sweeping out the dirt with bath-brooms.

Arkady Pavlich sent them away, and installed himself on a bench under the holy images. The coachmen began bringing in the trunks, bags, and other conveniences trying each time to subdue the noise of their heavy boots.

Meantime Arkady Pavlich began questioning the bailiff about the crops, the sowing, and other agricultural subjects. The bailiff gave satisfactory answers, but spoke with a sort of heavy awkwardness, as though he were buttoning up his coat with benumbed fingers. He stood at the door and kept looking round on the watch to make way for the nimble footman. Behind his powerful shoulders I managed to get a glimpse of the steward's wife in the outer room surreptitiously belabouring some other peasant woman. Suddenly a cart rumbled up and stopped at the steps; the steward came in.

This man, as Arkady Pavlich said, of real administrative power, was short, broad-shouldered, grey-haired, and thick-set, with a red nose, little blue eyes, and a beard of the shape of a fan. We may observe, by the way, that ever since Russia has existed, there has never yet been an instance of a man who growing rich and prosperous without acquiring a big, bushy beard; sometimes a man may have had a thin, wedge-shape beard all his life; but then all at once it is all round his face like a halo—one wonders where the hair has come from! The steward must have been making merry at Perov: his face was unmistakably flushed, and there was a smell of spirits about him.

"Ah, our father, our gracious benefactor!" he began in a sing-song voice, and with a face of such deep feeling that it seemed as if he would burst into tears any minute. "At last you have graciously deigned to come to us . . . your hand, your honour's hand," he added, his lips protruded in anticipation.

Arkady Pavlich gratified his desire.

"Well, brother Sofron, how are things going with you?" he asked in a friendly voice.

"Ah, our father!" cried Sofron. "How should they go ill? How should things go ill, now that you, our father, our benefactor, have graciously deigned to lighten our poor village with your presence, to make us happy till the day of our death? Thank the Lord, Arkady Pavlich! Thank the Lord! All is right by your gracious favour."

At this point Sofron paused, gazed upon his master, and, as though carried away by a rush of feeling (tipsiness had its share in it, too),





Ivan Turgenev. This watercolour portrait was made in 1838-39 when Turgenev was studying in Berlin and is ascribed to K. Gorbunov.



Mikhail Bakunin (1814-1876), an unfinished self-portrait, 1838.



Berlin University. First half of the 19th century. Turgenev, Granovsky and Bakunin attended lectures here in 1839-40.



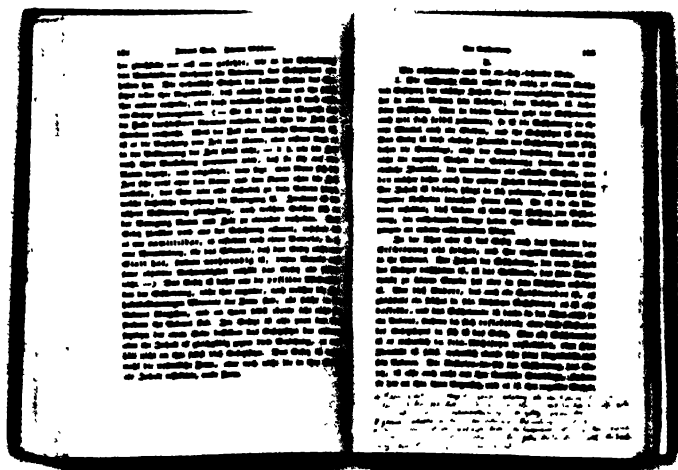
Timofei Granovsky (1813-1855), a Russian historian and public figure, professor of Moscow University, and Turgenev's friend. Lithograph by P. Borel.



Nikolai Stankevich (1813-1840), a poet and philosopher, who headed a young Muscovites' enlightenment group in the 1830s. Watercolour by L. Bekker, 1838



Ivan Turgenev at work, 1841. Drawing by Alexei Bakunin brother of the anarchist



The marginal notes in Hegel's *Science of Logic* were made by Turgenev when he read it in 1834 in Berlin. The book is on display in the Orel museum



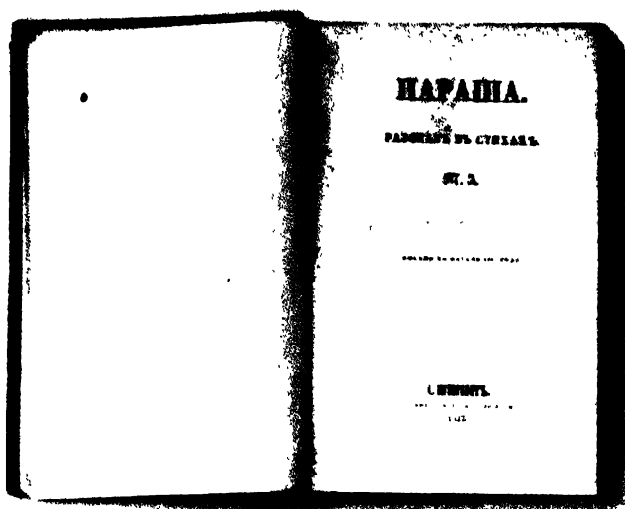
Tatiana Bakunina. From a watercolour made in the 1830s. Turgenev's attachment for his friend's sister (in 1841-43) found its reflection in the story *Correspondence*.



The Bakunins' home, Premukhino in Tver Gubernia, where Turgenev stayed more than once. From a photograph.



Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848), a literary critic and leader of the revolutionary democrats in Russia. This lithograph was made by P. Borel from the portrait by K. Gorbunov, 1859. Turgenev found that the artist had given Belinsky a "general's" look which was not in character with him.



Parasha, a poem published by Turgenev in 1843 in St. Petersburg and signed with the initials T. L. Belinsky thought very highly of this poem, which made a name for Turgenev in literary circles.



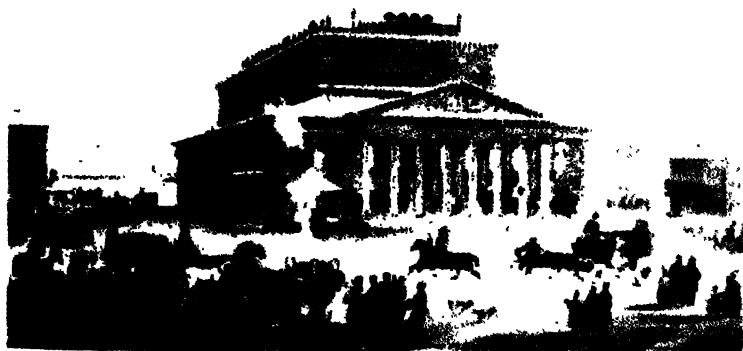
The hotel in Salzbrunn, Silesia, where Turgenev and Belinsky stayed in 1847. It was here that Belinsky wrote his famous "Letter to Gogol"—an indictment of serfdom in Russia.



Ivan Turgenev. From a daguerrotype made in the late 1840s.



Pauline Viardot, née Garcia (1821-1910), the famous singer
Turgenev's lifelong affection for her is a poetic page in
world culture. Watercolour by P. F. Sokolov, 1840s



St. Petersburg. The Bolshoi Theatre. Lithograph by Nuri, mid-nineteenth century. In 1836,
Turgenev, then a student, attended the premiere of Glinka's opera "Ivan Susanin".

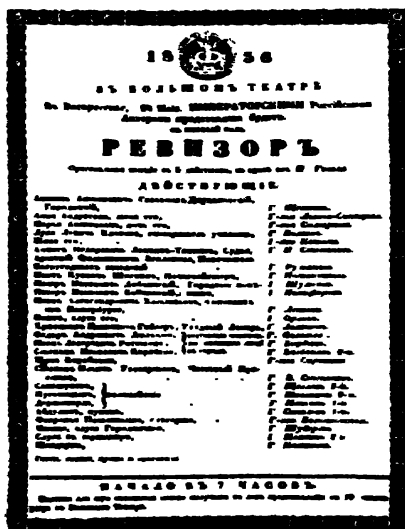
М.А.М.Труба,

Романъ въ 4-хъ действияхъ

Н. Мясоедовъ

Москва 1849 = 1844

The autograph of the title page of *The Dependent* (1849). The censors would not pass this play for production on the stage, and it was circulated in handwritten copies.



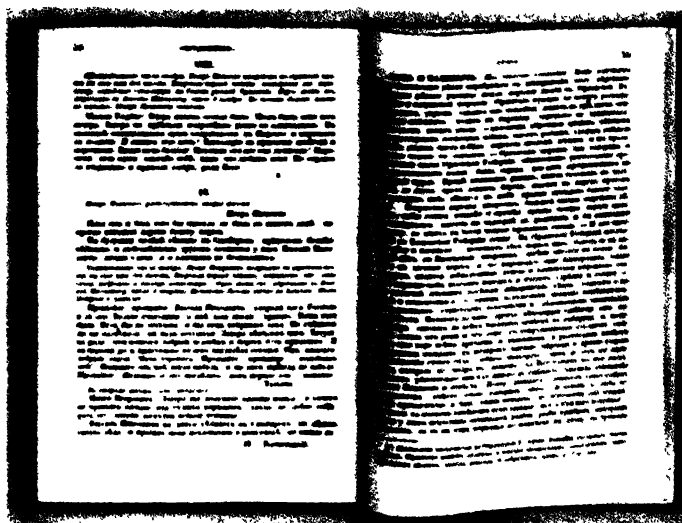
The playbill for the first performance of Gogol's *The Inspector General* at the Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg on April 19, (May 1) 1836. Turgenev attended this premiere.



Mikhail Schepkin (1788-1863), an outstanding dramatic actor who played the leads in Turgenev's *Provincial Lady*, *The Bachelor* and *The Dependent*. He and Turgenev were good friends. Drawing by A. Popov, 1853.



The Maly Theatre in Moscow. Turgenev highly appreciated the role played by the Maly Theatre in Russian culture.



The first publication of *Khor and Kalinich* in *Sovremennik* No. 1, 1847



An illustration by P. Sokolov for *The Steward* (1891-92). The artist worked on the images in *A Hunter's Sketches* for several years, and drew the scenery from nature in the vicinity of Turgenev's Spasskoye-Lutovinovo estate.



P. Sokolov's illustration for *Khor and Katunch*, 1891-2



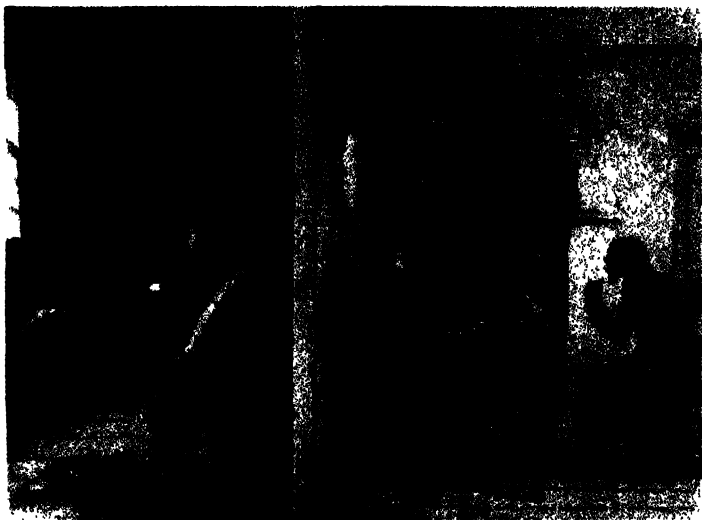
Ivan Turgenev's drawing for *The Frecholder Osvankov* in Indian ink. His drawings were later pasted into a copy of *A Hunter's Sketches* and this book was kept at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo.



P. Sokolov's illustration for *Lgov*, 1891-92.



The pond at *Lgov*. Photograph by V. Molchanov,



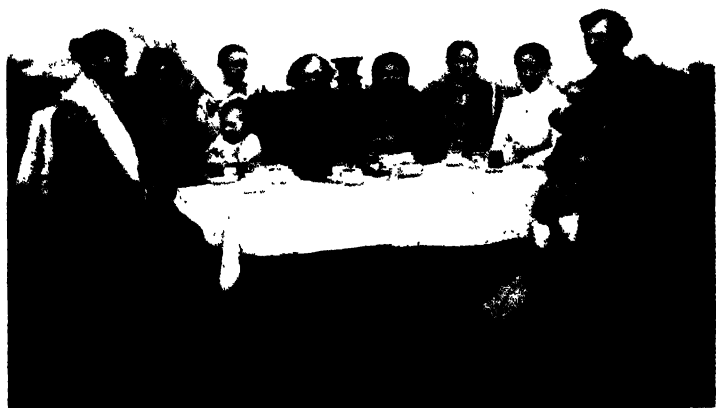
P. Sokolov's illustration for *The Counting-House*, 1891-92.



K. Lebedev's illustration for *Bezhin Meadow*. Phototype, 1884.



"Village" by F. Vassiliev. Canvas, oils. 1869. A view of a pauperised Russian village before the abolition of serfdom.



The family of Afanasy Alifanov. The photograph was taken at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo in the 1880s. Afanasy Alifanov was a hunter, and a friend of Turgenev's. He was the prototype of Ermolai in the story *Ermolai and the Miller's Wife*.

begged once more for his hand, and intoned with even greater gusto:

"Ah, you, our father, our benefactor... and... There, God bless me! I've grown stupid with delight... God bless me! I look and can't believe my eyes! Ah, our father!"

Arkady Pavlich glanced at me, smiled, and asked, "*N'est-ce pas que c'est touchant?*"

"But, Arkady Pavlich, your honour," resumed the indefatigable steward, "what have you done to us? You've broken my heart, your honour; you did not graciously let me know of your visit. Where are you to put up for the night? You see here it's dirty."

"Nonsense, Sofron, nonsense!" Arkady Pavlich responded with a smile. "It's all right here."

"But, our father, it's all right—for whom? For peasants like us it's all right; but for you... oh, our father, our gracious protector! Oh, you... our father!... Pardon an old fool like me; I'm off my head, bless me! I'm gone clean crazy."

Meanwhile supper was served; Arkady Pavlich began to eat. The old man packed his son off, saying he smelt too strong.

"Well, settled the division of land, old chap, hey?" inquired Mr. Penochkin, obviously trying to imitate the peasant speech, with a wink to me.

"We've settled the land shares, your honour; all by your gracious favour. Day before yesterday the list was made out. The Khlinov folks made themselves disagreeable about it at first... They were disagreeable about it, certainly. They wanted this... and they wanted that... and God knows what they didn't want! But they're a set of fools, your honour!—an ignorant lot. But we, your honour, by our gracious will, gave an earnest of our gratitude, and satisfied Mikolai Mikolaich, the mediator; we acted in everything according to your orders, your honour; as you graciously ordered, so we did, and nothing did we do unbeknown to Egor Dmitrich."

"Egor reported to me," Arkady Pavlich remarked with dignity.

"To be sure, your honour—Egor Dmitrich, to be sure."

"Well, then, now I suppose you're satisfied."

Sofron had only been waiting for this.

"Ah, you are our father, our benefactor!" he began in the same sing-song as before. "Indeed, now, your honour... why, for you, our father, we pray day and night to God Almighty... There's too little land, of course..."

Penochkin cut him short.

"There, that'll do, that'll do, Sofron; I know you're eager in my service. Well, and how goes the threshing?"

Sofron sighed.

"Well, our father, the threshing's none too good. But there, your honour, Arkady Pavlich, let me tell you about a little matter that came to pass." (Here he came closer to Mr. Penochkin, with his arms apart, bent down, and screwed up one eye.) "There was a dead body found on our land."

"How was that?"

"I can't think myself, your honour; it seems like the doing of the evil one. But, luckily, it was found near the boundary; on our side of it, to tell the truth. I ordered them to drag it on to the neighbour's strip at once, while it was still possible, and set a watch there, and sent word round to our folks. 'Mum's the word,' says I. But I explained how it was to the police officer just in case of the worst. 'You see how it was,' says I. And of course I had to treat him and slip some notes into his hand... Well, what do you say, your honour? We shifted the burden on to other shoulders; you see a dead body's a matter of two hundred rubles, as sure as death."

Mr. Penochkin laughed heartily at his steward's cunning, and said several times to me, indicating him with a nod, "*Quel gaillard, ah?*"

Meantime it was quite dark out of doors; Arkady Pavlich ordered the table to be cleared, and hay to be brought in. The valet spread out sheets for us and arranged pillows; we lay down. Sofron retired after receiving his instructions for the next day. Arkady Pavlich, before falling asleep, talked a little more about the first-rate qualities of the Russian peasant, and at that point made the observation that since Sofron had had the management of the place, the Shipilovka peasants had never been one kopeck in arrears... The watchman struck his board; a baby, who apparently had not yet had time to be imbued with a sentiment of dutiful self-abnegation, began crying somewhere in the cottage... We fell asleep.

The next morning we got up rather early; I was getting ready to start for Ryabovo, but Arkady Pavlich was anxious to show me his estate, and begged me to remain. I was not averse myself to seeing more of the first-rate qualities of that man of administrative power—Sofron—in their practical working. The steward made his appearance. He wore a blue coat, girded with a red belt. He talked much less than on the previous evening, kept an alert, intent eye on his master's face,

and gave precise and sensible answers. We set off with him to the threshing-floor. Sofron's son, the seven-foot bailiff, by every external sign a very slow-witted fellow, walked after us also, and we were joined farther on by the village constable, Fedoseich, a retired soldier, with immense moustaches and an extraordinary expression of face; he looked as though he had had some startling stock of astonishment a very long while ago, and had never quite got over it. We took a look at the threshing-floor, the barn, the corn-kiln, the outhouses, the windmill, the cattle-shed, the winter crops, and the hemp-fields; everything was, as a fact, in excellent order; only the dejected faces of the peasants rather puzzled me. Sofron had had an eye to the ornamental as well as the useful; he had planted all the ditches with willows, between the stacks he had made little paths to the threshing-floor and strewn them with fine sand; on the windmill he had constructed a weathercock of the shape of a bear with his jaws open and a red tongue sticking out; he had attached to the brick cattle-shed something of the nature of a Greek façade, and on it inscribed in white letters: "Construt in the village Shipilovka one thousand eight Hundred fortieth year. This cattle-shed." Arkady Pavlich was quite touched, and fell to expatiating in French to me upon the advantages of the system of rent-payment, adding, however, that labour-dues came more profitable to the owner—"but, after all, that wasn't everything." He began giving the steward advice how to plant his potatoes, how to prepare cattle-food, and so on. Sofron heard his master's remarks out with attention, sometimes replied, but did not now address Arkady Pavlich as his father, or his benefactor, and kept insisting that there was too little land; that is would be a good thing to buy more. "Well, buy some then," said Arkady Pavlich, "I've no objection; in my name, of course." To this Sofron made no reply; he merely stroked his beard.

"And now it would be as well to ride down to the copse," observed Mr. Penochkin. Saddle-horses were led out to us at once; we went off to the copse. This "copse" proved to be a dense virgin forest, for which Arkady Pavlich praised Sofron and clapped him on the shoulder. In regard to forestry, Arkady Pavlich clung to the Russian ideas, and told me on that subject an amusing—in his words—anecdote, of how a jocose landowner had given his forester a good lesson by pulling out nearly half his beard, by way of a proof that growth is none the thicker for being uprooted. In other matters, however, neither Sofron nor Arkady Pavlich objected to innovations. On our

return to the village, the steward took us to look at a winnowing-machine he had recently ordered from Moscow. The winnowing-machine did certainly work beautifully, but if Sofron had known what a disagreeable incident was in store for him and his master on this last excursion, he would doubtless have stopped at home with us.

This was what happened. As we came out of the barn the following spectacle confronted us. A few paces from the door, near a muddy paddle, in which three ducks were splashing unconcernedly, there stood two peasants—one, an old man of sixty, the other, a lad of twenty—both in patched homespun shirts, barefoot, and with a cord tied round their waists for belts. The village constable Fedoseich was busily engaged with them, and would probably have succeeded in inducing them to retire if we had lingered a little longer in the barn, but catching sight of us, he drew himself up and stood at attention. Close by stood the bailiff gaping, his fists hanging irresolute. Arkady Pavlich frowned, bit his lip, and went up to the suppliants. They both prostrated themselves at his feet in silence.

"What do you want? What are you pleading about?" he inquired in a stern voice, a little through his nose. (The peasants glanced at one another, and did not utter a syllable, only blinked a little as if the sun were in their faces, and their breathing came quicker.)

"Well, what is it?" Arkady Pavlich said again; and turning at once to Sofron, "Of what family?"

"The Tobolev family," the steward answered slowly.

"Well, what do you want?" Mr. Penochkin said again; "Have you lost your tongues, or what? Tell me, you, what is it you want?" he added, with a nod at the old man. "And don't be afraid, stupid."

The old man craned forward his dark-brown wrinkled neck, opened his bluish twitching lips, and in a hoarse voice uttered the words, "Protect us, lord!" and again bowed to the ground. The young peasant prostrated himself too. Arkady Pavlich looked at their bent necks with dignity, threw back his head, and stood with his legs rather wide apart. "What is it? Whom do you complain of?"

"Have mercy, lord! Let us breathe... We are tormented beyond endure." (The old man spoke with difficulty.)

"Who torments you?"

"Sofron Yakovlich, your honour."

Arkady Pavlich was silent a minute.

"What's your name?"

"Andriy, your honour."

"And who's this?"

"My son, your honour."

Arkady Pavlich was silent again; he twitched his moustaches.

"Well! And how has he tormented you?" he began again, looking over his moustaches at the old man.

"Your honour, he has ruined us utterly. Two sons, your honour, he's sent for recruits out of turn, and now he is taking the third also. Yesterday, your honour, our last cow was taken from the yard, and my old woman was beaten by his worship here." (He pointed to the bailiff.)

"Hm!" commented Arkady Pavlich.

"Let him not destroy us, gracious protector!"

Mr. Penochkin scowled. "What's the meaning of this?" he asked his steward in a low voice, with an air of displeasure.

"He's a drunken fellow, sir," answered the steward, even more deferentially than ever, "and lazy, too. He's never been out of arrears this five years back, sir."

"Sofron Yakovlich paid the arrears for me, your honour," the old man went on. "It's the fifth year's come that he's paid it, and since that time he's brought me into slavery to him, your honour, and here—"

"And why did you get into arrears?" Mr. Penochkin asked sternly. (The old man's head sank.) "You're fond of drinking, hanging about the taverns, I dare say." (The old man opened his mouth to speak.) "I know you," Arkady Pavlich went on emphatically, "you think you've nothing to do but drink, and lie on the stove, and let steady peasants answer for you."

"And he's an insolent fellow, too," the steward put in.

"That's sure to be so; it's always the way; I've noticed it more than once. The whole year round, he drinks and swears, and then he kneels at one's feet."

"Your honour, Arkady Pavlich," the old man began despairingly, "have pity, protect us; when have I been insolent? Before God Almighty, I swear it is beyond my strength. Sofron Yakovlich has taken a dislike to me, I don't know why—God be his judge! He will ruin me utterly, your honour... The last boy... and him he..." (A tear glistened in the old man's wrinkled yellow eyes.) "Have pity, gracious lord, defend us!"

"And it's not only us..." the younger peasant began.

Arkady Pavlich flew into a rage at once.

"And who asked your opinion, hey? Till you're spoken to, hold your tongue. How dare you? Silence, I tell you, silence!... Why, upon my word, this is simply mutiny! No, my friend, I don't advise you to mutiny on my domain... on my..." (Arkady Pavlich stepped forward, but probably recollected my presence, turned round, and put his hands in his pockets.) "*Je vous demande bien pardon, mon cher,*" he said with a forced smile, dropping his voice significantly. "*C'est le mauvais côté de la médaille...* There, that'll do, that'll do," he went on, not looking at the peasants, "I'll see to it... that'll do, you can go." (The peasants did not rise.) "Well, haven't I told you... that'll do. You can go, I tell you."

Arkady Pavlich turned his back on them. "Nothing but vexation," he muttered between his teeth, and strode with long steps homewards. Sofron followed him. The village constable opened his eyes wide, looking as if he were just about to take a tremendous leap into space. The bailiff drove the ducks away from the puddle. The suppliants remained as they were a while, then looked at each other, and without once looking back went on their way.

Two hours later I was at Ryabovo, and making ready to go shooting, accompanied by Anpadist, a peasant I knew well. Penochkin had been out of humour with Sofron up to the time I left. I began talking to Anpadist about the Shipilovka peasants and Mr. Penochkin, and asked him whether he knew the steward there.

"Sofron Yakovlich? Don't I?"

"What sort of man is he?"

"He's not a man; he's a dog; you couldn't find another brute like him between here and Kursk."

"How is that?"

"Why, Shipilovka's only reckoned as—what's his name?—Mr. Penkin's; he's not the master there; Sofron's the master."

"Really?"

"He's master, just as if it were his own. The peasants are all in debt to him; they work for him like slaves; he'll send one off carting; another, another way... He harries them out of their lives."

"They haven't much land, I heard?"

"Not much land! He rents two hundred acres from the Khlinov peasants alone, and three hundred from our folks. And he doesn't only traffic in land; he does a trade in horses and stock, and pitch, and butter, and hemp, and one thing and the other... He's sharp, awfully sharp, and rich too, the beast! But what's bad—he beats them."

He's a brute, not a man; a cur, I tell you, a regular cur; that's what he is!"

"How is it they don't make complaints of him?"

"I dare say, the master'd be pleased! There's no arrears; so what does he care? I should like to see anyone try to complain," he added after a brief pause. "He'd make you sorry . . . yes, you'd better not try it . . . No, he'd make you sorry . . ."

I thought of Antip, and told him what I had witnessed.

"There," commented Anpadist, "he will worry the life; out of him now, he'll simply badger him to death. The bailiff will be beating him all the time. Such a poor, unlucky chap, come to think of it! And what's his offence? He had some wrangle on a village meeting with him, the steward, he lost all patience, I suppose. A great matter, truly, to make so much of! So the steward began pecking at him, Antip. Now he'll finish him off. You see, the cur—God forgive my transgressions!—knows whom to fall upon. The old men that are a bit richer, that have big, working families, he doesn't touch, the devil! But here he does what he likes! Why he's sent Antip's sons for recruits out of turn, the heartless ruffian, the cur, God forgive my transgressions!"

We went hunting.

Salzbrunn, Silesia, July 1847

THE COUNTING-HOUSE

It was autumn. For some hours I had been wandering across country with my gun, and should probably not have returned till evening to the tavern on the Kursk highroad where my troika was awaiting me, had not an exceedingly fine and persistent rain, which had worried me all day with the obstinacy and ruthlessness of some old maiden lady, driven me at last to seek at least a temporary shelter somewhere in the neighbourhood. While I was still deliberating in which direction to go, my eye suddenly fell on a low shanty near a field sown with peas. I went up to the shanty, glanced under the thatched roof, and saw an old man so infirm that he reminded me at once of the dying goat Robinson Crusoe found in a cave on his island. The old man was squatting on his heels, his little dim eyes half-closed, while hurriedly, but carefully, like a hare (the poor fellow had not a single tooth), he munched a dry, hard pea, incessantly rolling it from side to side. He was so absorbed in this occupation that he did not notice my entrance.

"Grandfather! Hey, grandfather!" said I. He ceased munching, lifted his eyebrows high, and with an effort opened his eyes.

"What?" he mumbled in a broken voice.

"Where is there a village near?" I asked.

The old man fell to munching again. He had not heard me. I repeated my question louder than before.

"A village?... But what do you want?"

"Why, shelter from the rain."

"What?"

"Shelter from the rain."

"Ah!" (He scratched his sunburnt neck.) "Well, now, you go," he said suddenly, waving his hands indefinitely, "so... as you go by the wood—see, as you go—there'll be a road; you pass it by, and keep right

on to the right; keep to the right, keep to the right, keep to the right . . . Well, there will be Ananyevo. Or else you'd get to Sitovka."

I followed the old man with difficulty. His moustaches muffled his voice, and his tongue, too, did not obey him readily.

"Where are you from?" I asked him.

"What?"

"Where are you from?"

"Ananyevo."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am watchman."

"Why, what are you watching?"

"The peas."

I could not help smiling.

"Really!—how old are you?"

"God knows."

"Your sight's failing, I expect."

"What?"

"Your sight's failing, I daresay?"

"Yes, it's failing. At times I can hear nothing."

"Then how can you be a watchman, eh?"

"Oh, my elders know about that."

"Elders!" I thought, and I gazed not without compassion at the poor old man. He fumbled about, pulled out of his bosom a bit of coarse bread, and began sucking it like a child, with difficulty moving his sunken cheeks.

I walked in the direction of the wood, turned to the right, kept on, kept to the right, as the old man had advised me, and at last got to a large village with a stone church in the new style, i.e., with columns, and a spacious manor house, also with columns. While still some way off I noticed through the fine network of falling rain a cottage with a deal roof, and two chimneys, higher than the others, in all probability the dwelling of the village elder; and towards it I bent my steps in the hope of finding, in this cottage, a samovar, tea, sugar, and some not absolutely sour cream. Escorted by my shivering dog, I went up the steps into the outer room, opened the door, and instead of the usual appurtenances of a peasant cottage, I saw several desks, heaped up with papers, two red cupboards, bespattered inkstands, heavy pewter boxes of blotting sand, long penholders, and so on. At one of the desks was sitting a young man of twenty with a puffy, sickly face, diminutive eyes, a greasy-looking forehead, and seem-

ingly endless sideburns. He was dressed, as one would expect, in a grey nankeen coat, shiny with wear at the waist and the collar.

"What do you want?" he asked me, flinging his head up like a horse taken unexpectedly by the nose.

"Does the bailiff live here... or—"

"This is the chief counting-house of the manor," he interrupted. "I'm the clerk on duty. Didn't you see the sign-board? That's what it was put up for."

"Where could I dry my clothes? Has anybody a samovar in the village?"

"Of course they have samovars," replied the young man in the grey coat with dignity. "Go to Father Timofei's or to the servants' cottage, or else to Nazar Tarasich, or to Agrafena, the poultry-woman."

"Who are you talking to, you blockhead? Can't you let me sleep, fool!" shouted a voice from the next room.

"Here's a gentleman's come in to ask where he can dry himself."

"What sort of a gentleman?"

"I don't know. With a dog and a gun."

A bedstead creaked in the next room. The door opened, and in came a stout, short man of fifty, with a bull neck, goggle eyes, extraordinarily round cheeks, and his whole face positively shining with sleekness.

"What is it you wish?" he asked me.

"To dry my things."

"There's no place here."

"I didn't know this was the counting-house; I am willing, though, to pay..."

"Well, perhaps it could be managed here," rejoined the fat man.

"Won't you come inside here?" (He led me into another room, but not the one he had come from.) "Will this do for you?"

"Very well... And could I have tea and cream?"

"Certainly, at once. If you'll meantime take off your things and rest, the tea shall be got ready in a minute."

"Whose property is this?"

"Madame Losnyakova's, Elena Nikolayevna."

He went out. I looked round: against the partition separating my room from the office stood a huge leather sofa; two high-backed chairs, also covered in leather, were placed on both sides of the solitary window which looked out on the village street. On the walls,

covered with a green paper with pink patterns on it, hung three immense oil paintings. One depicted a setter-dog with a blue collar, bearing the inscription "This is my consolation"; at the dog's feet flowed a river; on the opposite bank of the river a hare of quite disproportionate size with ears cocked up was sitting under a pine-tree. In another picture two old men were eating a melon; behind the melon was visible in the distance a Greek temple with the inscription "The Temple of Satisfaction". The third picture represented the half-nude figure of a woman in recumbent position *en raccourci*, with red knees and very fat heels. My dog had immediately, with supernatural efforts, crawled under the sofa, and apparently found a great deal of dust there, as he kept sneezing violently. I went to the window. Boards had been laid across the street slantwise from the manor house to the counting-house—a very useful precaution, as, thanks to our rich black soil and the persistent rain, the mud was terrible. In the grounds of the manor house, which stood with its back to the street, there was the constant going and coming there always is about manor houses: maids in faded calico frocks flitted to and fro; house-serfs sauntered through the mud, stood still and scratched their spines meditatively; the constable's horse, tied up to a post, swang his tail lazily, and with his head high up, gnawed at the fence; hens were clucking; drab-looking turkeys kept up an incessant gobble-gobble. On the steps of a dark crumbling outhouse, probably the bath-house, sat a stalwart lad with a guitar, singing with some spirit the well-known ballad:

*I'm a-leaving this enchanting spot
To go into the desert...*

The fat man came into the room.

"They're bringing your tea," he told me with an affable smile.

The young man in the grey coat, the clerk on duty, laid on the old card-table a samovar, a tea-pot, a tumbler on a broken saucer, a jug of cream, and a bunch of Bolkhovo biscuit rings hard as flint. The fat man went out.

"What is he?" I asked the clerk. "The bailiff?"

"No, sir; he was the chief cashier, but now he has been promoted to be head-clerk."

"Haven't you got a bailiff, then?"

"No, sir. There's a steward, Mikhail Vikulov, but no bailiff."

"Is there a manager, then?"

"Yes; a German, Lindamandol, Karl Karlich; only he does not manage the estate."

"Who does manage it, then?"

"Our mistress herself."

"You don't say so. And are there many of you in the office?"

The young man reflected.

"There are six of us."

"Who are they?" I inquired.

"Well, first there's Vassily Nikolayevich, the head-cashier; then Pyotr, one clerk; Pyotr's brother, Ivan, another clerk; the other Ivan, also a clerk; Konstantin Narkizov, another clerk; and me here—there's a lot of us, you can't count all of them."

"I suppose your mistress has a great many serfs in her house?"

"No, not to say a great many."

"How many, then?"

"I dare say it runs up to about a hundred and fifty."

We were both silent for a while.

"I suppose you write a good hand, eh?" I began again.

The young man grinned from ear to ear, went into the office and brought in a sheet covered with writing.

"This is my writing," he announced, still with the same smile on his face.

I looked at it; on the square sheet of greyish paper there was written, in a good bold hand, the following document:

ORDER

From the Chief Office of the Manor of Ananyevo
to the Steward, Mikhail Vikulov. No. 209

Whereas some person unknown entered the English garden last night in an intoxicated condition, and with unseemly songs waked the French governess, Madame Engènie, and disturbed her, and who was it, and what were the watchmen doing, and who were on watch in the garden and permitted such disorderliness: as regards all the above-written matters, your orders are to investigate in detail, and report immediately to the Office.

Head-Clerk, NIKOLAI KHVOSTOV

A huge heraldic seal was attached to the order, with the inscription "Seal of the Chief Office of the Manor of Ananyevo"; and below stood the signature "To be executed exactly, Elena Losnyakova."

"Your lady signed it herself, eh?" I queried.

"To be sure; she always signs herself. Without that the order would be of no effect."

"Well, and now shall you send this order to the steward?"

"No, sir. He'll come himself and read it. That's to say, it'll be read to him; you see, he's no scholar." (The clerk on duty was silent again for a while.) "But what do you say?" he added, simpering. "Is it well written?"

"Very well written."

"It wasn't composed, I must confess, by me. Konstantin is the great one for that."

"What?... Do you mean the orders have first to be composed among you?"

"Why, how else could we do? Couldn't write them off straight without making a rough copy."

"And what salary do you get?" I inquired.

"Thirty-five rubles, and five rubles for boots."

"And are you satisfied?"

"Of course I am satisfied. It's not everyone can get into an office like ours. Though in my case, it was on the cards; I have an uncle who is in service as a butler."

"And you're pleased?"

"Yes, sir. Though, to tell the truth," he went on with a sigh, "a place at a merchant's, for instance, is better for the likes of us. It is a very good thing. Yesterday evening a merchant came to us from Venev, and his man got talking to me... Yes, that's a good place, no doubt about it; a very good place."

"Why? Do the merchants pay more wages?"

"Lord preserve us! Why, a merchant would give you the sack if you asked him for wages. No, at a merchant's you must live on trust and on fear. He'll give you food, and drink, and clothes, and all. If you give him satisfaction, he'll do more... Talk of wages, indeed! You don't need them. And a merchant lives in plain, Russian style, like ourselves; you go with him on a journey—he has tea, and you have it; what he eats, you eat. A merchant... Oh, a merchant's a very different thing from a gentleman; a merchant's not whimsical; if he's out of temper, he'll give you a clout, and there it ends. He doesn't

nag nor cavil. But with a gentleman it's a woeful business! Nothing's as he likes it—this is not right, and that he can't fancy. You hand him a glass of water or something to eat. 'Ugh, the water stinks! The dish stinks!' You take it out, stay a minute outside the door, and bring it back. 'Now, that's good; this doesn't stink now.' And as for the ladies, I tell you, the ladies are something beyond everything!... And the young ladies are the worst!..."

"Fedyushka!" came the fat man's voice from the office.

The clerk went out quickly. I drank up my tea, lay down on the sofa, and fell asleep. I slept for two hours.

When I woke, I meant to get up, but I was overcome by laziness; I closed my eyes, but did not fall asleep again. On the other side of the partition, in the office, they were talking in subdued voices. Involuntarily I began to listen.

"Quite so, quite so, Nikolai Ereimeich," one voice was saying, "quite so. One can't but take that into account; yes, certainly!... Hm!" (the speaker coughed.)

"You may believe me, Gavrila Antonich," replied the fat man's voice: "If I don't know how things are done here, who does?"

"Who does, if you don't, Nikolai Ereimeich? You're, one may say, the first person here. Well, then, how's it to be?" pursued the voice I did not recognise. "What decision are we to come to, Nikolai Ereimeich? Allow me to put the question."

"What decision, Gavrila Antonich? The thing depends, so to say, on you; you don't seem overanxious."

"Upon my word, Nikolai Ereimeich, what do you mean? Our business is trading; it's our business to buy. That's what we live by, Nikolai Ereimeich, one may say."

"Eight rubles a measure," said the fat man emphatically.

A sigh was audible.

"Nikolai Ereimeich, sir, you ask a heavy price."

"Impossible, Gavrila Antonich, to do otherwise; I speak as before God Almighty; impossible."

Silence followed.

I got up softly and looked through a crack in the partition. The fat man was sitting with his back to me. Facing him sat a merchant, a man about forty, lean and pale, who looked as if he had been rubbed with sunflower oil. He was incessantly fingering his beard, and very rapidly blinking and twitching his lips.

"Wonderful the young winter crops this year, one may say," he

began again. "I've been admiring them as I drove here. All the way from Voronezh they've come up wonderfully, first-class, one may say."

"The crops are pretty fair, certainly," answered the head-clerk, "but you know the saying, Gavril Antonich, autumn bids fair, but spring may be foul."

"That's so, indeed, Nikolai Ereimeich; all is in God's hands; it's the absolute truth what you've just remarked . . . It seems your visitor's awake now."

The fat man turned round and listened . . .

"No, he's asleep. I'll look, though . . ."

He came up to the door.

"No, he's asleep," he repeated and went back to his place.

"Well, so what are we to say, Nikolai Ereimeich?" the merchant resumed. "We must bring our little business to a conclusion. Let it be so, Nikolai Ereimeich, let it be so," he went on, blinking incessantly, "two grey notes and a white for your favour, and there," (he nodded in the direction of the house) "six and a half a measure. Done, eh?"

"Four grey notes," answered the clerk.

"Come, three, then."

"Four greys, and no white."

"Three, Nikolai Ereimeich."

"Three and a half, and not a farthing less."

"Three, Nikolai Ereimeich."

"No's the answer, Gavril Antonich."

"My, what a pig-headed fellow you are!" muttered the merchant.

"Then I'd better arrange it with the lady herself."

"That's as you like," answered the fat man, "far better, I should say. Why should you bother with me, after all? Much better, indeed!"

"Now, now! Nikolai Ereimeich, don't take it to heart! That was nothing but talk."

"No, really, why . . ."

"Please, don't be angry . . . I tell you I was joking. Well, take your three and a half; you will have your way."

"I ought to have got four, but I was in too great a hurry—like an ass!" muttered the fat man.

"Then it is six and a half up there at the house, Nikolai Ereimeich, is it? The corn will be sold for six and a half?"

"Six and a half, as we said already."

"Well, your hand on that then, Nikolai Eremeich" (the merchant clapped his outstretched fingers against the clerk's palm). "It's a deal!" (The merchant got up.). "So then, Nikolai Eremeich, sir, I'll go now to your lady, and bid them send up my name, and so I'll say to her, 'Nikolai Eremeich,' I'll say, 'has made a bargain with me for six and a half.'"

"That's right, Gavril Antonich."

"And now, allow me."

The merchant handed the clerk a small roll of notes, bowed, shook his head, picked up his hat with two fingers, shrugged his shoulders, and, with a sort of undulating motion went out, his boots creaking discreetly. Nikolai Eremeich went to the wall, and, as far as I could make out, began sorting the notes handed him by the merchant. A red head, adorned with thick whiskers, was thrust in at the door.

"Well?" asked the head. "All as it should be?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

The fat man made an angry gesture with his hand, and pointed to my room.

"Ah, all right!" responded the head, and vanished.

The fat man went up to the desk, sat down, opened a book, took out an abacus, and began shifting the beads to and fro as he counted, using not the forefinger but the third finger of his right hand to produce an effect of gentility.

The clerk on duty came in.

"What is it?"

"Sidor is here from Goloplyoki."

"Oh! Ask him in. Wait a bit, though... First go and look whether that gentleman's still asleep, or whether he has waked up."

The clerk on duty came cautiously into my room. I laid my head on my game-bag, which served me as a pillow, and closed my eyes.

"He's asleep," whispered the clerk on duty, returning to the office.

The fat man uttered something.

"Well, send Sidor in," he said at last.

And again. A peasant of about thirty came in, a red-cheeked, vigorous-looking fellow, of huge stature, with brown hair, and a short curly beard. He crossed himself, praying to the holy image, bowed.

to the head-clerk, held his hat before him in both hands, and stood erect.

"Good day, Sidor," said the fat man, tapping with the counting beads.

"Good day to you, Nikolai Ereimeich."

"Well, what are the roads like?"

"Pretty fair, Nikolai Ereimeich. A bit muddy." (The peasant spoke slowly and not loud.)

"Wife quite well?"

"She's all right!"

The peasant gave a sigh and shifted one leg forward. Nikolai Ereimeich put his pen behind his ear, and blew his nose.

"Well, what have you come about?" he proceeded to inquire, putting his check handkerchief into his pocket.

"Why, Nikolai Ereimeich, they're asking for carpenters from our village."

"Well, aren't there any among you, hey?"

"To be sure there are, Nikolai Ereimeich; our earnings are all from the wood, to be sure. But it's the busy time, Nikolai Ereimeich. Where's the time to come from?"

"Busy time! I dare say, you're so eager to work for outsiders, and don't care to work for your mistress. It's all the same!"

"The work's all the same, certainly, Nikolai Ereimeich, but..."

"Well?"

"The pay's... not so..."

"What next! You've been spoiled; that's what it is."

"And what's more, Nikolai Ereimeich, there'll be only a week's work, but they'll keep us hanging on a month. One time there's not material enough, and another time they'll send us into the garden to clear the paths."

"What of it? Our lady herself was pleased to give the order, so it's useless you and me talking about it."

Sidor was silent; he began shifting from one leg to the other.

Nikolai Ereimeich put his head on one side, and began busily playing with the counting beads.

"Our peasants, Nikolai Ereimeich..." Sidor began at last, hesitating over each word, "told me to convey to your honour... there is... see here..." (He thrust his big hand into the bosom of his coat and began to pull out a folded linen kerchief with a red border.)

"What's this, idiot, are you out of your senses?" the fat man

interposed hurriedly. "Go on; go to my cottage," he continued, almost pushing the bewildered peasant out, "ask for my wife there . . . she'll give you some tea; I'll be round directly; go on. For goodness' sake, I tell you, go on."

Sidor went away.

"Ugh! . . . what a bear!" the head-clerk muttered after him, shaking his head, and set to work again on his abacus.

Suddenly shouts of "Kuprya! Kuprya! There's no knocking-down Kuprya!" were heard in the street and on the steps, and a minute later there came into the counting-house a small man of sickly appearance, with an extraordinarily long nose and large staring eyes, who carried himself with a great air of superiority. He was dressed in a ragged old surtout, with a plush collar and diminutive buttons. He carried a bundle of firewood on his shoulder. Five house-serfs were crowding round him, all shouting, "Kuprya! There's no knocking-down Kuprya! Kuprya's been put to mind the stoves!" But the man in the coat with the plush collar did not pay the slightest attention to the uproar made by his companions, and was not in the least out of countenance. With measured steps he went up to the stove, flung down his load, straightened himself, took a snuff-box out of his tail-pocket, and, his eyes popping out, began helping himself to a pinch of dry trefoil mixed with ashes.

At the entrance of this noisy party the fat man had at first knitted his brows and risen from his seat, but, seeing what it was, he smiled, and only told them not to shout. "There's a hunter," said he, "asleep in the next room."

"What sort of hunter?" two men asked with one voice.

"A gentleman."

"Ah!"

"Let them make a row," said the man with the plush collar. "What do I care, so long as they don't touch me? They've put me to mind the stoves . . ."

"Stoves! Stoves!" the others put in gleefully.

"It's the mistress's orders," he went on with a shrug of his shoulders. "Just you wait . . . they'll put you to mind the pigs yet. But I've been a tailor, and a good tailor too, learnt my trade in the best house in Moscow, and worked for generals, and nobody can take that from me. What are you so happy about? What? Have you been released from your bondage? You're a pack of idlers, not worth your salt; that's what you are! If they let me free I shan't starve; I shall be all

right. Give me a passport, and I'd send a good rent home, and satisfy the masters. But what would you do? You'd die off like flies, that's what you'd do!"

"You're lying, too!" Interposed a pock-marked lad with white eyelashes, a red cravat, and torn elbows. "You went off with a passport, but never a halfpenny of rent did the masters get from you, and you never earned a kopeck for yourself, you just managed to crawl home again and you've never had a new rag on you since."

"Ah, well, what could one do, Konstantin Narkizich," responded Kuprya. "A man falls in love—a man's ruined and done for! You go through what I have, Konstantin Narkizich, before you blame me!"

"And you picked out a nice one to fall in love with—a regular fright."

"No, you mustn't say that, Konstantin Narkizich."

"Don't you tell me! I've seen her, you know; I saw her with my own eyes last year in Moscow."

"Last year she had gone off a little, certainly," observed Kuprya.

"No, gentlemen, I tell you what," a tall, thin man, with a face spotted with pimples, a valet probably, from his frizzed and pomatummed head, remarked in a casual and disdainful voice. "Let Kuprian Afanasich sing us his song. Come on now; begin Kuprian Afanasich."

"Yes! Yes!" put in the others. "Hooray for Alexandra! He got you, Kuprya; 'pon my soul... Sing away, Kuprya!... You're a regular brick, Alexandra!" (Serfs often use feminine terminations in referring to a man as an expression of endearment.) "Sing away!"

"This is not the place to sing," Kuprya replied firmly, "this is the manor counting-house."

"And what's that to do with you? Got your eye on a place as clerk, eh?" answered Konstantin with a coarse laugh. "That's what it must be!"

"Everything rests with the mistress," observed the poor wretch.

"There, that's what he's got his eye on! A fellow like him! Oo! oo! a!"

And they all roared; some hopped with merriment. Louder than all laughed a lad of fifteen, probably the son of an aristocrat among the house-serfs; he wore a waistcoat with bronze buttons,

and a cravat of lilac colour, and had already managed to grow a paunch.

"Come, tell us, confess now, Kuprya," Nikolai Eremeich began complacently, obviously tickled and diverted himself, "is it bad minding stoves? Is it a silly job, eh?"

"Nikolai Eremeich," began Kuprya, "you're head-clerk among us now, certainly: there's no disputing that, no; but you know you have been in disgrace yourself, and you, too, have lived in a peasant's hut."

"You'd better look out and not forget yourself," the fat man interrupted emphatically. "People joke with a fool like you; you ought to have sense, and be grateful to them for taking notice of a fool like you."

"It was a slip of the tongue, Nikolai Eremeich; I beg your pardon..."

"Yes, indeed, a slip of the tongue."

The door opened and a little servant boy ran in.

"Nikolai Eremeich, Mistress wants you."

"Who's with the mistress?" he asked the servant boy.

"Aksinya Nikitishna, and a merchant from Venev."

"I'll be there this minute. And you, lads," he continued in a persuasive voice, "better move off out of here with the newly-appointed stove-minder; if the German pops in, he'll make a complaint for certain."

The fat man smoothed his hair, coughed into his hand, which was almost completely hidden in his coat-sleeve, buttoned himself, and set off with long strides to see the lady of the manor. In a little while the whole party trailed out after him, together with Kuprya. My old friend, the clerk on duty, was left alone. He set to work sharpening the pencils, and dropped asleep in his chair. A few flies promptly seized the opportunity and settled round his mouth. A mosquito alighted on his forehead, and, stretching its legs out with a regular motion, slowly buried its sting into his flabby flesh. The same red head with whiskers showed itself again at the door, looked in and then came into the office, together with the rather ugly body belonging to it.

"Fedyushka! Eh, Fedyushka! Always asleep," said the head.

The clerk on duty opened his eyes and got up from his seat.

"Nikolai Eremeich has gone to the mistress?"

"Yes, Vassily Nikolayevich."

"Ah! ah!" thought I. "This is he, the head-cashier."

The head-cashier began walking about the room. He really slunk rather than walked, and altogether resembled a cat. An old black frock-coat with very narrow skirts hung about his shoulders; he kept one hand in his bosom, while the other was for ever fumbling about his tight horse-hair cravat, and he turned his head with a certain effort. He wore noiseless kid boots, and trod very softly.

"Mr. Yagushkin was asking for you today," added the clerk on duty.

"Hm, asking for me? What did he say?"

"Said he'd go to Tyutyurev this evening and would wait for you. 'I want to discuss some business with Vassily Nikolayevich,' said he, but what the business was he didn't say; 'Vassily Nikolayevich will know,' says he."

"Hm!" replied the head-cashier, and he went up to the window.

"Is Nikolai Ereimeich in the counting-house?" a loud voice was heard asking in the outer room, and a tall man, apparently angry, with an irregular but bold and expressive face and rather clean in his dress, stepped over the threshold.

"Isn't he here?" he inquired, with a quick look round.

"Nikolai Ereimeich is with the mistress," responded the cashier.

"Tell me what you want, Pavel Andreich; you can tell me... What is it you want?"

"What do I want? You want to know what I want?" (The cashier gave a sickly nod.) "I want to give him a lesson, the fat, greasy villain, the scoundrelly tell-tale!... I'll give him a tale to tell!"

Pavel flung himself into a chair.

"What are you saying, Pavel Andreich! Calm yourself... Aren't you ashamed? Don't forget whom you're talking about, Pavel Andreich!" stammered the cashier.

"Forget whom I'm talking about? What do I care for his being made head-clerk? A fine person they've found to promote! They've let the goat loose in the kitchen-garden, you may say!"

"Hush, hush, Pavel Andreich, hush! Drop that... what rubbish are you talking?"

"So Master Fox is beginning to fawn? I will wait for him," Pavel said with passion, and he struck a blow on the table. "Ah, here he's coming!" he added with a look out the window. "Speak of the devil. Welcome, welcome!" (He got up.)

Nikolai Ereimeich came into the counting-house. His face was

shining with satisfaction, but he was rather taken aback at seeing Pavel Andreich.

"Good day to you, Nikolai Ereimeich," said Pavel in a significant tone, advancing deliberately to meet him.

The head-clerk made no reply. The face of the merchant showed itself in the doorway.

"What, won't you deign to answer me?" pursued Pavel. "But no . . . no," he added, "that's not it; I won't get anywhere by shouting and abuse. No, you'd better tell me in a friendly way, Nikolai Ereimeich, what do you persecute me for? What do you want to ruin me for? Come, speak."

"This is no fit place to settle scores," the head-clerk answered in some agitation, "and no fit time. But I must say I wonder at one thing: what makes you suppose I want to ruin you, or that I'm persecuting you? And if you come to that, how can I persecute you? You're not employed in my counting-house."

"I should hope not," answered Pavel, "that would be the last straw! But why are you humbugging, Nikolai Ereimeich? You understand me very well."

"No, I don't understand."

"Yes, you do understand."

"No, by God, I don't understand!"

"Swearing, too! Well, tell us, since it's come to that: have you no fear of God? Why can't you let the poor girl alone? What do you want of her?"

"Whom are you talking of?" the fat man asked with feigned amazement.

"Ugh! He doesn't know; what next? I'm talking of Tatyana. Have some fear of God—what do you want to revenge yourself for? You ought to be ashamed: married man like you, with children as big as I am; while I . . . I mean marriage: I'm acting honourably."

"How am I to blame in that, Pavel Andreich? The mistress won't permit you to marry; it's her seignorial will! What have I to do with it?"

"Why, haven't you been plotting with that old hag, the house-keeper, eh? Haven't you been telling tales, eh? Tell me, aren't you bringing all sorts of stories up against the defenceless girl? I suppose it's not your doing that she's been degraded from laundrymaid to washing dishes in the scullery? And it's not your doing that she's beaten and dressed in sackcloth? . . . You ought to be ashamed of

yourself—an old man like you! You may have a paralytic stroke any day... You will have to answer to God."

"Go on, Pavel Andreich, heap abuse on me... You shan't have a chance to be insolent much longer."

Pavel fired up.

"What? You dare to threaten me?" he said passionately. "You think I'm afraid of you. No, my man, I'm not that sort! What have I to be afraid of? I can make my bread everywhere. For you, now, it's another thing! It's only here you can live and tell tales, and filch..."

"Fancy the conceit of the fellow!" interrupted the clerk, who was also beginning to lose patience. "A feldsher, simply a feldsher, a wretched leech; and listen to him—isn't he a high and mighty personage!"

"Yes, a feldsher, and except for this feldsher you'd have been rotting in the graveyard by now. It was some devil drove me to cure him," he added between his teeth.

"You cured me? No, you tried to poison me; you dosed me with aloes," the clerk replied.

"What was I to do if nothing but aloes had any effect on you?"

"The use of aloes is forbidden by the Board of Health," pursued Nikolai. "I'll lodge a complaint against you yet... You tried to do me in—that was what you did! But the Lord suffered it not."

"Hush, now, that's enough, gentlemen," the cashier put in.

"Stand off!" bawled the clerk. "He tried to poison me! Do you understand that?"

"That's very likely... Listen, Nikolai Ereimeich," Pavel began in despairing accents. "For the last time, I beg you... You forced me to it—I can't stand it any longer. Leave us alone, do you hear? Or else, by God, it'll go ill with one or other of us!"

The fat man flew into a rage.

"I'm not afraid of you!" he shouted, "do you hear, milksop? I got the better of your father; I broke his horns—a warning to you; take care!"

"Don't talk of my father, Nikolai Ereimeich."

"I like that! Who are you to give me orders?"

"I tell you, don't talk of him!"

"And I tell you, don't forget yourself! However necessary you think yourself, if our lady has to choose between us two it's not you'll be kept, my man! None's allowed to mutiny, mind!"

(Pavel was shaking with fury.) "As for the wench, Tatyana, she deserves all she's been getting... wait a bit, she'll get something worse!"

Pavel rushed at him with uplifted fists, and the clerk rolled heavily on the floor.

"Handcuff him, handcuff him," groaned Nikolai Eremeich...

I won't take upon myself to describe the end of this scene; I fear I have wounded the reader's delicate susceptibilities as it is.

The same day I returned home. A week later I heard that Madame Losnyakova had kept both Pavel and Nikolai in her service, but had sent away the girl Tatyana; it appeared she was not wanted.

BIRYUK

I was coming back from hunting one evening alone in a droshky. I was eight versts from home; my good mare trotted briskly along the dusty road, pricking up her ears with an occasional snort; my weary dog stuck close to the hind wheels, as though he were fastened there. A thunder-storm was coming on. In front, a huge purplish storm-cloud slowly rose from behind the forest; long grey rain-clouds raced over my head and to meet me; the willows stirred and whispered restlessly. The suffocating heat changed suddenly to a damp chilliness; the darkness rapidly thickened. I gave the horse a lash with the reins, descended a steep slope, pushed across a dry watercourse overgrown with brushwood, mounted the hill, and drove into the forest. The road ran before me, meandering between thick hazel bushes, now enveloped in darkness; I advanced with difficulty. The droshky jumped up and down over the hard roots of the ancient oaks and limes, which continually intersected a pair of deep ruts—the tracks of cart wheels; my horse began to stumble. A violent wind suddenly began to roar overhead; the trees blustered; big drops of rain fell with sharp tap and splash on the leaves; there came a flash of lightning and the thunder-storm broke loose. The rain fell in torrents. I went on at a walk, and soon was forced to stop; my horse foundered; I could not see an inch before me. I managed to take refuge somehow in a spreading bush. Crouching down and covering my face, I waited patiently for the storm to blow over, when suddenly, in a flash of lightning, I saw a tall figure on the road. I stared intently in that direction—and again the figure seemed to spring out of the ground near my droshky.

“Who’s that?” inquired a bass voice.

“Why, who are you?”

“I’m the forester here.”

I mentioned my name.

"Oh, I know! Are you on your way home?"

"Yes. But, with the storm raging like this..."

"Yes, it's quite a storm," replied the voice.

A pale flash of lightning lit up the forester from head to foot; a brief crashing clap of thunder followed at once upon it. The rain lashed with redoubled force.

"It won't be over soon," the forester went on.

"What's to be done?"

"I'll take you to my hut, if you like," he said abruptly.

"That would be very kind of you."

"Please to take your seat."

He went up to the mare's head, took her by the bridle and pulled her up. We set off. I held on to the cushion of the droshky, which rocked like a boat on the sea, and called my dog. My poor mare splashed with difficulty through the mud, slipped and stumbled; the forester hovered before the shafts like a ghost. We drove rather a long while; at last my guide stopped. "Here we are home, sir," he observed in a quiet voice. The gate creaked; some puppies barked in chorus. I raised my head, and in a flash of lightning I made out a small hut in the middle of a large yard, surrounded by a wattle-fence. In the one little window there was a dim light. The forester led his horse up to the steps and knocked at the door. "Coming, coming!" we heard a little piping voice; there was the patter of bare feet, the bolt creaked, and a girl of twelve, in a little smock tied round the waist with list, appeared in the doorway with a lantern in her hand.

"Show the gentleman in," he said to her, "and I will put the droshky in the shed."

The girl glanced at me, and went into the hut. I followed her.

The forester's hut consisted of one room, smoky, low-pitched, and empty, without a shelf-bed or partition. A tattered sheepskin hung on the wall. On the bench lay a single-barrelled gun; in the corner lay a heap of rags; two great pots stood near the oven. A pine splinter was burning on the table flickering up and dying down mournfully. In the very middle of the hut hung a cradle, suspended from the end of a long horizontal pole. The little girl put out the lantern, sat down on a tiny stool, and with her right hand began swinging the cradle, while with her left she attended to the smouldering pine splinter. I looked round—my heart ached: it's not cheering to go

into a peasant's hut at night. The baby in the cradle breathed hard and fast.

"Are you all alone here?" I asked the girl.

"Yes," she uttered, hardly audibly.

"You're the forester's daughter?"

"Yes," she whispered.

The door creaked, and the forester, bending his head, stepped across the threshold. He lifted the lantern from the floor, went up to the table, and lighted a candle.

"I dare say you're not used to the splinter light?" said he, and he shook back his curls.

I looked at him. Rarely has it been my fortune to behold such a sample of manhood. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and built in marvellous proportion. His powerful muscles stood out in strong relief under his wet homespun shirt. A curly black beard hid half of his stern and manly face; small brown eyes looked out boldly from under broad eyebrows which met in the middle. He stood before me, his arms held akimbo.

I thanked him, and asked his name.

"My name's Foma," he answered, "and my nickname's Biryuk."*

"Oh, so you're Biryuk."

I looked with redoubled curiosity at him. From my Ermolai and others I had often heard stories about the forester Biryuk, whom all the peasants of the surrounding districts feared like the plague. According to them there had never been such a master of his business in the world before. "He won't let you carry off an armful of brushwood; he'll drop upon you like a bolt from the blue, whatever time it may be, even in the middle of the night, and you needn't think of resisting him—he's strong and nimble as the devil... And there's no softening him anyhow; neither by vodka nor by money; he is not tempted by anything. More than once good folks have planned to do away with him, but no—it's never come off."

That was how the neighbouring peasants spoke of Biryuk.

"So you're Biryuk," I repeated, "I've heard talk of you, brother. They say you show no mercy to anyone."

"I do my duty," he answered grimly, "It's not right to eat the master's bread for nothing."

* The name Biryuk is used in Orel Gubernia to denote a solitary, misanthropic man.—*Author's Note.*

He took an axe from his girdle and began splitting splinters.

"Have you no wife?" I asked him.

"No," he answered, with a vigorous sweep of the axe.

"She's dead, I suppose?"

"No... yes... she's dead," he added, and turned away.

I was silent; he raised his eyes and looked at me.

"She ran away with townsman who happened to pass by," he brought out with a cruel smile. The girl hung her head; the baby waked up and began crying; the girl went to the cradle. "There, give it him," said Biryuk, thrusting a dirty feeding-bottle into her hand. "Him, too, she abandoned," he went on in an undertone, pointing to the baby. He went up to the door, stopped and turned round.

"A gentleman like you," he began, "wouldn't care for our bread, I dare say, and except bread, I've—"

"I'm not hungry."

"Well, that's for you to say. I would have heated the samovar, but I've no tea... I'll go and see how your horse is getting on."

He went out and slammed the door. I looked round again. The hut struck me as more melancholy than ever. The acrid smell of stale smoke choked my breathing unpleasantly. The girl did not stir from her place, and did not raise her eyes; from time to time she pushed the cradle, and timidly pulled her slipping smock up on to her shoulder; her bare legs hung motionless.

"What's your name?" I asked her.

"Ulita," she said, her mournful little face drooping more than ever.

The forester came in and sat down on the bench.

"The storm's passing over," he observed after a brief silence, "if you wish it, I will guide you out of the forest."

I got up; Biryuk took his gun and examined the fire-pan.

"What's that for?" I inquired.

"There's mischief in the forest... They're cutting a tree down on Mare's Ravine," he added, in reply to my look of inquiry.

"As though you could hear it from here?"

"I can hear it outside."

We went out together. The rain had ceased. Heavy masses of storm-cloud were still huddled in the distance; from time to time there were long flashes of lightning; but here and there overhead the dark-blue sky was already visible; stars twinkled through the swiftly flying clouds. The outlines of the trees, drenched with rain and stirred

by the wind, began to stand out in the darkness. We listened. The forester took off his cap and bent his head. "There!" he said suddenly, and he stretched out his hand. "See what a night he's picked." I had heard nothing but the rustle of the leaves: Biryuk led the mare out of the shed. "However," he added aloud, "this way I shall miss him." "I'll go with you . . . if you like?" "Certainly," he answered, and he backed the horse in again, "we'll catch him in a trice, and then I'll show you the way. Let's be off."

We started, Biryuk in front, I following him. Heaven only knows how he found his way, but he only stopped now and then, and that merely to listen to the strokes of the axe. "There," he muttered, "do you hear? Do you hear?" "Why, where?" Biryuk shrugged his shoulders. We went down into a ravine; the wind was still for an instant; the rhythmical strokes reached my hearing distinctly. Biryuk glanced at me and shook his head. We went farther through the wet bracken and nettles. A slow muffled crash was heard . . .

"He's felled it," muttered Biryuk. Meantime the sky had grown clearer and clearer; there was a faint light in the forest. We clambered at last out of the ravine.

"Wait here a little," the forester whispered to me. He bent down, and raising his gun above his head, vanished among the bushes. I listened with strained attention. Across the continual hum of the wind faint sounds from close by reached me; there was a cautious tap of an axe on the branches, the creaking of wheels, the snorting of a horse . . .

"Where are you off to? Stop!" the iron voice of Biryuk thundered suddenly. Another voice gave a pitiful shriek, like a trapped hare . . . A struggle ensued.

"No, you don't," Biryuk said panting, "you're not going to get off . . ." I rushed in the direction of the noise, and, stumbling at every step, reached the scene of the conflict. A felled tree lay on the ground, and near it Biryuk was busily engaged holding the thief down and binding his hands behind his back with a belt. I came closer. Biryuk got up and set him on his feet. I saw a peasant drenched with rain, in tatters, and with a long dishevelled beard. A sorry little nag, half covered with a stiff mat, was standing by, together with a rough cart. The forester did not utter a word; the peasant, too, was silent; his head was shaking.

"Let him go," I whispered in Biryuk's ear, "I'll pay for the tree."

Without a word Biryuk took the horse by the forelock with his left

hand; in his right he held the thief by the belt. "Now turn round, you rat!" he said grimly.

"The axe there, take it," muttered the peasant.

"No reason to lose it, certainly," said the forester, and he picked up the axe. We started. I walked behind . . . The rain began sprinkling again, and soon fell in torrents. With difficulty we made our way to the hut. Biryuk left the captured horse in the middle of the yard, led the peasant into the room, loosened the knot in the belt, and made him sit down in a corner. The girl, who had fallen asleep near the oven, jumped up and began staring at us in silent terror. I sat down on the bench.

"Ugh, what a downpour!" remarked the forester, "You will have to wait till it's over. Won't you lie down?"

"Thanks."

"I would have shut him in the store loft, on your honour's account," he went on, indicating the peasant, "but you see the bolt—"

"Leave him here; never mind," I interrupted.

The peasant stole a glance at me from under his brows. I vowed inwardly to set the poor wretch free, come what might. He sat without stirring on the bench. By the light of the lantern I could make out his worn, wrinkled face, his overhanging yellow eyebrows, his restless eyes, his thin limbs . . . The girl lay down on the floor, just at his feet, and again dropped asleep. Biryuk sat at the table, his head propped by his hands. A cricket chirped in the corner. The rain pattered on the roof and streamed down the windows; we were all silent.

"Foma Kuzmich," said the peasant suddenly in a thick, broken voice, "Foma Kuzmich!"

"What is it?"

"Let me go."

Biryuk made no answer.

"Let me go . . . hunger drove me to it; let me go."

"I know you," retorted the forester severely, "your village's all alike—all thieves."

"Let me go," repeated the peasant. "Our manager . . . he's ruined us, let me go!"

"Ruined, indeed! Nobody can be allowed to steal."

"Let me go, Foma Kuzmich . . . Don't destroy me. Your master, you know yourself, will have no mercy on me."

Biryuk turned away. The peasant was shivering as though he were

in the throes of fever. His head was shaking, and his breathing came in broken gasps.

"Let me go," he repeated with mournful desperation. "Let me go; for God's sake, let me go! I'll pay; let God be my witness, I will! Truly, it was through hunger . . . the little ones are crying, you know, yourself. It's hard for us."

"You needn't go stealing, for all that."

"My horse," the peasant went on, "my poor little horse, at least . . . our only beast . . . let it go."

"I tell you I can't. I'm not a free man; I have my own task-master. And you oughtn't be spoilt, either."

"Let me go! It's through want, Foma Kuzmich, want—and nothing else—let me go!"

"I know you!"

"Oh let me go!"

"Ugh, what's the use of talking to you! Sit quiet, or else you'll catch it. Don't you see the gentleman, hey?"

The poor wretch hung his head . . . Biryuk yawned and laid his head on the table. The rain still persisted. I was waiting to see what would happen.

Suddenly the peasant stood erect. His eyes were blazing and his face flushed dark red. "Well, do your worst, then; eat me up and be damned," he began, his eyes screwed up and the corners of his mouth pulled down, "come, devil, drink Christian blood, drink . . ."

The forester turned round.

"I'm speaking to you, barbarian, bloodsucker, you!"

"Are you drunk or what, to swear like that abusive?" the forester asked in amazement. "Are you out of your senses?"

"Drunk! Not at your expense, cursed fiend, brute, brute, brute!"

"Ah, you—I'll show you!"

"What's that to me? It's all one; I'm done for; what can I do without a horse? Kill me—it's the same, whether it's through hunger or like this—it's all one. Ruin us all—wife, children . . . kill us all at once. But just you wait we'll get at you!"

Biryuk got up.

"Kill me, kill me," the peasant went on in savage tones, "kill me, come, come, kill me . . ." (The girl jumped up hastily from the ground and stared at him.) "Kill me, kill me!"

"Silence!" thundered the forester, and he took two steps forward.

"Stop, Foma, stop," I shouted, "leave him alone . . . Let him be."

"I won't be silent," the luckless wretch went on. "What do I care how I end up, you fiend, you brute, damn you . . . But just you wait, you don't have long to boss it, they'll wring your neck for you, just you wait!"

Biryuk clutched him by the shoulder, I rushed to help the peasant.

"Leave off, master!" the forester shouted to me.

I should not have feared his threats, and already had stretched out my hand, but to my intense amazement, with one pull he tugged the belt off the peasant's elbows, took him by the scruff of the neck, thrust his cap over his eyes, opened the door, and shoved him out.

"Go to the devil with your horse!" he shouted after him, "but mind, next time . . ."

He came back into the hut and began rummaging in the corner.

"Well, Biryuk," I said at last, "you've astonished me; I see you're a splendid fellow."

"Oh, stop that, master," he cut me short with an air of vexation, "Only please don't tell on me. But I'd better see you on your way now," he added. "It looks as though the rain is not going to stop soon . . ."

In the yard there was the rattle of the wheels of the peasant's cart.

"There he goes!" he muttered, "I'll show him . . ."

Half an hour later he parted from me at the edge of the wood.

TWO COUNTRY GENTLEMEN

I have already had the honour, kind readers, of introducing to you several of my neighbours; let me now seize a favourable opportunity (it is always a favourable opportunity with us writers) to make known to you two more gentlemen, on whose lands I often used to go shooting—very worthy, law-abiding persons, who enjoy universal esteem in several uyezds.

First I will describe to you the retired Major-General Vyacheslav Illarionovich Khvalinsky. Picture to yourselves a tall and once slender man, now inclined to corpulence, but not in the least decrepit or even elderly, a man of ripe age; in his very prime, as they say. It is true the once regular and even now rather pleasing features of his face have undergone some change, his cheeks are flabby; wrinkles radiate closely from his eyes; a few teeth are not, as Saadi, according to Pushkin, used to say; his light-brown hair—at least, all that is left of it—has assumed a purplish hue, thanks to a tincture bought at the Romni horse-fair of a Jew who gave himself out as an Armenian; but Vyacheslav Illarionovich has a smart walk and a ringing laugh, jingles his spurs and curls his moustaches, and, finally, speaks of himself as an old cavalry man, whereas we all know that really old men never admit of being old. He usually wears a frock-coat buttoned up to the top, a high cravat, starched collars, and grey sprigged trousers of a military cut; he wears his hat tilted over his forehead, leaving all the back of his head exposed. He is a good-natured man, but of rather curious notions and habits. For instance, he can never treat gentry of no considerable wealth or standing as equals. When he talks to them, he usually looks sideways at them, his cheek pressed hard against his stiff white collar, or suddenly he turns and silently fixes them with a clear stony stare, pauses and moves the whole skin of his head under his hair; he even has a way of his own in pronouncing

many words when he speaks to them; he never says, for instance: "Thank you, Pavel Vassilyich", or "This way, if you please, Mikhailo Ivanich", but always: "Fanks, Pa'l'Asilich," or "Is way, please, Mi'l'Vanich." With persons of the lower grades of society, his behaviour is still more quaint; he never looks at them at all, and before making known his desires to them, or giving an order, he repeats several times in succession, with a puzzled, far-away air: "What's your name? . . . What, what's your name?" with extraordinary sharp emphasis on the first word, which gives the Russian phrase a rather close resemblance to the call of a quail. He is very fussy and terribly close-fisted, but manages his land badly; he had chosen as steward on his estate a retired quarter-master, a Ukrainian, and a man of really exceptional stupidity. None of us, though, in the management of his estate, has ever surpassed a certain St. Petersburg dignitary, who, having perceived from the reports of his steward that the sheds in which the corn was dried on his estate were often liable to catch fire, whereby he lost a great deal of grain, gave the strictest orders that for the future they should not put the sheaves in till the fire had been completely put out! This same great personage conceived the brilliant idea of sowing his fields with poppies, as the result of an apparently simple calculation: poppy being dearer than rye, he argued, it is consequently more profitable to sow poppy. He it was, too, who ordered his women serfs to wear kokoshniks on their heads after a pattern bespoken from St. Petersburg; and to this day the peasant women on his lands actually wear this old headgear—only they wear them over their kerchiefs . . . But let us return to Vyacheslav Illarionovich. Vyacheslav Illarionovich is a devoted admirer of the fair sex, and directly he catches sight of a pretty woman in the promenade of his uyezd town, he is promptly off in pursuit, but falls at once into a sort of limping gait—that is the remarkable feature of the case. He is fond of playing cards, but only with people of a lower standing; they toady him with "Your Excellency" in every sentence, while he can scold them and find fault to his heart's content. When he chances to play with the governor or any official personage, a marvellous change comes over him: he is all nods and smiles; he looks them in the face; he seems positively flowing with honey. He even loses without grumbling. Vyacheslav Illarionovich does not read much; when he is reading he incessantly works his moustaches and eyebrows up and down, as if a wave were passing from below upwards over his face. This undulatory motion in Vyacheslav Illarionovich's

face is especially marked when (before company, of course) he happens to be reading the columns of the *Journal des Débats*. In the gubernia elections he plays a rather important part, but on grounds of economy he declines the honourable dignity of marshal. "Gentlemen," he usually says to the noblemen who press that office upon him, and he speaks in a voice filled with condescension and self-sufficiency: "I am much indebted for the honour; but I have made up my mind to consecrate my leisure to solitude." And, as he utters these words, he turns his head several times to right and to left, and then, with a dignified air, adjusts his chin and his cheek over his cravat. In his young days he served as adjutant to some very important person, whom he never speaks of except by his Christian name and patronymic; they say he fulfilled other functions than those of an adjutant; that, for instance, in full parade get-up, buttoned up to the chin, he had to lash his chief with sprigs in the bath-house—but one can't believe everything one hears. General Khvalinsky is not, however, fond of talking about his career in the army, which is certainly rather curious; it seems that he had never seen active service. General Khvalinsky lives in a small house alone; he has never known the conjugal joys and consequently he is still regarded as a possible match, and indeed a very eligible one. But he has a housekeeper, a dark-eyed, dark-browed, plump, fresh-looking woman of five-and-thirty with a moustache; she wears starched dresses even on weekdays, and on Sundays puts on muslin sleeves as well. Vyacheslav Illarionovich is at his best at large dinner-parties given by gentlemen of the neighbourhood in honour of the governor and other dignitaries: then he is, one may say, in his natural element. On these occasions he usually sits, if not on the governor's right hand, at least at no great distance from him; at the beginning of dinner he is more disposed to nurse his sense of personal dignity, and, sitting back in his chair, he loftily scans the necks and stand-up collars of the guests, without turning his head; but towards the end of the meal he unbends, begins smiling in all directions (he had been all smiles for the governor from the first), and sometimes even proposes the toast to the fair sex, the ornament of our planet, as he says. General Khvalinsky shows to advantage, too, at all solemn public functions, examinations, consecrations, assemblies, and exhibitions; no one in church goes up for the benediction with such style. Vyacheslav Illarionovich's servants are never noisy and clamorous on the breaking up of assemblies or in crowded thoroughfares; as they make a

way for him through the crowd or call his carriage, they say in an agreeable guttural baritone, "By your leave, by your leave allow General Khvalinsky to pass", or "Call for General Khvalinsky's carriage". Khvalinsky's carriage is, it must be admitted, of a rather queer design, and the footmen's liveries are rather worn (that they are grey, with red facings, it is hardly necessary to remark); his horses, too, have seen a good deal of hard service in their time; but Vyacheslav Illarionovich has no pretensions to splendour, and goes so far as to think it beneath his rank to make an ostentation of wealth. Khvalinsky has no special gift of eloquence, or possibly has no opportunity to displaying his rhetorical powers, as he not only has a particular aversion to arguments, but generally does not tolerate his words being disputed and assiduously avoids long conversation of all sorts, especially with young people. This is certainly judicious on his part; the worst of having to do with the younger generation is that they are so ready to forget the proper respect and submission due to their superiors. In the presence of persons of higher rank Khvalinsky is for the most part silent, while with persons of a lower order, whom he apparently despises, though he constantly associates with them, his remarks are curt and abrupt, expressions such as the following occurring incessantly: "That's a piece of folly, what you're saying now", or "I feel myself compelled, sir, to remind you", or "You ought to realise with whom you are dealing", and so on. He is particularly dreaded by post-masters, officers of the local boards, and superintendents of posting stations. He never entertains anyone in his house, and lives, as the rumour goes, like a miser. For all that, he's an excellent country gentleman, "An old soldier, an honest fellow, a man of principle, *vieux grognard*," his neighbours say of him. The gubernia prosecutor alone permits himself to smile when General Khvalinsky's excellent and solid qualities are referred to before him—but what will not envy drive men to!...

However, we will pass now to another country gentleman.

Mardary Apollonich Stegunov has no sort of resemblance to Khvalinsky; I hardly think he has ever served in any capacity, and he has never been reckoned handsome. Mardary Apollonich is a little, bald old man of a respectable corpulence, with a double chin and little soft hands and a considerable paunch. He is very hospitable and jovial, as the saying is, for his comfort; summer and winter alike he wears a striped wadded dressing-gown. There's only one thing in which he is like General Khvalinsky: he, too, is a bachelor. He owns

five hundred souls. Mardary Apollonich's interest in his estate is of a rather superficial description; ten years ago, not to be behind the age, he ordered a threshing-machine from Butenop's in Moscow, locked it up in a barn, and then set his mind at rest on the subject. Sometimes on a fine summer day he would have out his droshky, and drive off to his fields, to look at the crops and gather corn-flowers. Mardary Apollonich's existence is carried on in quite the old style. His house is of an old-fashioned construction; in the hall there is, of course, a smell of kvass, tallow candles and leather; close at hand, on the right, there is a sideboard with tobacco-pipes and towels; in the dining-room there are family portraits, flies, a great pot of geraniums, and a squeaky piano; in the drawing-room, three sofas, three tables, two mirrors, and a wheezy clock of tarnished enamel with filigree bronze hands; in the study, a table piled up with papers, and a bluish-coloured screen covered with pictures cut out of various literary works of past century; a book-case full of musty books, spiders, and black dust; a puffy arm-chair; an Italian window; a sealed-up door into the garden... Everything, in short, just as is customary. Mardary Apollonich has a multitude of servants, all dressed in the old-fashioned style: in long blue full coats with high collars, pantaloons of a muddy hue, and shortish yellow waistcoats. His estate is under the superintendence of a steward, a peasant with a beard that covers the whole of his sheepskin; his household is managed by a stingy, wrinkled old woman, whose face is always tied up in a brown kerchief. In Mardary Appolonich's stable there are thirty horses of various hues and sizes; he drives out in a coach built on the estate, that weighs 150 poods. He receives visitors very cordially, and entertains them sumptuously; in other words, thanks to the stupefying powers of our national cookery, he deprives them of all capacity for doing anything but playing preference. For his part, he never does anything, and has even given up reading the Dream Book. But there are a good many of our landed gentry in Russia exactly like him. It will be asked: "What is my object in talking about him?" Well, by way of answering that question, let me describe to you one of my visits at Mardary Apollonich's.

I arrived one summer evening at seven o'clock. An evening service was only just over; the priest, a young man, apparently very timid and only lately come from the seminary, was sitting in the drawing-room near the door, on the extreme edge of a chair. Mardary Apollonich received me as usual, very cordially; he was genuinely delight-

ed to see any visitor, and indeed he was the most good-natured of men altogether. The priest got up and took his hat. ‘

“Wait a bit, wait a bit, father,” said Mardary Apollonich, not yet letting go of my hand, “don’t go. I have sent for some vodka for you.”

“I don’t drink, sir,” the priest muttered in confusion, blushing up to his ears.

“What nonsense!” answered Mardary Apollonich. “A priest, too! Mishka! Yushka! Vodka for the father!”

Yushka, a tall, thin old man of eighty, came in with a glass of vodka on a dark-coloured tray, with a few patches of flesh colour on it.

The priest began to decline.

“Come, drink it up, father, no ceremony; it’s too bad of you,” observed the host reproachfully.

The poor young man had to obey.

“There, now, father, you may go.”

The priest began to bow himself out.

“There, there, that’ll do, get along with you.”

“A capital fellow,” pursued Mardary Apollonich, looking after him, “I am very pleased with him; there’s only one thing—he’s young yet. Has a bent for sermons and does not drink, too. But how are you, my dear sir? What have you been doing? How are you? Let’s come out on to the balcony—it’s such a lovely evening.”

We went out on the balcony, sat down, and began to talk. Mardary Apollonich glanced below, and suddenly fell into a state of tremendous excitement.

“Whose hens are those? Whose hens are those?” he shouted. “Whose are those hens in the garden? . . . Yushka, go and find out whose are those hens? How many times I’ve forbidden it! How many times I’ve spoken about it!”

Yushka ran out.

“What disorder!” protested Mardary Apollonich. “It’s horrible!”

The unlucky hens, two speckled and one white with a topknot, as I remember, went on poking about tranquilly under the apple-trees, occasionally giving vent to their feelings in a prolonged clucking, when suddenly Yushka, bareheaded and stick in hand, with three other house-serfs of mature years, flew at them simultaneously. Then the fun began. The hens clucked, flapped their wings, hopped,

raised a deafening cackle; the house-serfs ran, tripping up and tumbling over; their master shouted from the balcony like one possessed, "Catch 'em, catch 'em! Catch 'em, catch 'em! Catch 'em, catch 'em, catch 'em! Whose are those hens?"

At last one servant succeeded in catching the hen with the topknot, tumbling upon it, and at the very same moment a little girl of eleven, with dishevelled hair, and a switch in her hand, jumped over the garden-fence from the village street.

"Ah, we see now whose hens they are!" cried the landlord in triumph. "They're Ermil the coachman's hens. He's sent his Nataalka for them. He didn't sent Parasha though," the landlord added in a low voice with a significant snigger. "Hey, Yushka! Let the hens alone; catch Nataalka for me."

But before the panting Yushka had time to reach the terrified little girl, the housekeeper suddenly appeared, snatched her by the arm, and slapped her several times on the back.

"That's it! That's it!" cried the master, "tun-tut-tut! . . . And carry off the hens, Avdotya," he added in a loud voice, and he turned with a beaming face to me. "That was a fine chase, my dear sir, hey? I'm in a regular perspiration, look."

And Mardary Apollonich went off into a series of chuckles.

We remained on the balcony. The evening was really exceptionally fine.

Tea was served us.

"Tell me," I began, "Mardary Apollonich: are those your peasants' huts, out there on the highroad, above the ravine?"

"Yes . . . why do you ask?"

"I wonder at you, Mardary Apollonich. It's really sinful. The huts are wretched cramped little hovels; there isn't a tree to be seen around; there's not a pond even; there's only one well, and that's no good. Could you really find no other place to settle them? And they say you've taken away the old hemp-grounds, too?"

"And what is one to do with this new division of the lands?" Mardary Apollonich made answer. "This redivision has irked me no end, and I foresee no sort of good from it. And as for my having taken away the hemp-grounds, and not having dug any ponds, or what not—as to that, my dear sir, I know my own business. I'm a plain man—I live in the old way. To my ideas, when a man's master—he's master; and when he's peasant—he's peasant. That's what I think about it."

To an argument so clear and convincing there was of course no answer.

"And besides," he went on, "those peasants are a wretched lot; they're in disgrace. Particularly two families there; why, my late father—God rest his soul!—couldn't bear them; positively couldn't bear them. And you know my precept is: where the father's a thief, the son's a thief; say what you like... Blood,—oh, blood is a great thing! I don't mind telling you that I sent quite a few men for soldiers from those two families out of turn and tried to get rid of them in other ways. But they breed too damned quickly for me!"

Meanwhile there was a perfect stillness in the air. Only rarely there came a gust of wind, and the lest one, as it sank near the house, brought to our ears the sound of rhythmically repeated blows, seeming to come from the stable. Mardary Apollonich was in the act of lifting a saucer full of tea to his lips, and was just inflating his nostrils to sniff its fragrance—no true-born Russian, as we all know, can drink his tea without this preliminary—when he stopped short, listened, nodded his head, sipped his tea, and putting the saucer on the table, with the most good-natured smile imaginable, murmured as though involuntarily accompanying the blows: "Chucki-chucki-chuck! Chucki-chuck!"

"What is it?" I asked puzzled.

"Oh, they're punishing a scamp of a fellow by my order. Do you happen to remember Vasya, who waits at the sideboard?"

"Which Vasya?"

"Why, the one who waited on us at dinner just now. He with the long whiskers."

The fiercest indignation could not have stood against the clear mild gaze of Mardary Apollonich.

"What's the matter, young man? What is it?" he said, shaking his head. "One might think I was criminal or something, the way you're staring at me! 'Whom he loveth he chasteneth'; you know that."

A quarter of an hour later I had taken leave of Mardary Apollonich. As I was driving through the village I caught sight of Vasya. He was walking down the village street, cracking nuts. I told the coachman to stop the horses and called him up.

"Well, my man, so they've been punishing you today?" I said to him.

"How did you know?" answered Vasya.

"Your master told me."

"The master himself?"

"What did he order you to be punished for?"

"Oh, I deserved it, sir, I deserved it. They don't punish for nothing here; that's not the way with us—no, no. Our master's not like that; our master... you won't find another master like him in all the gubernia."

"Drive on!" I said to the coachman. "That's old Russia for you!"
I mused on my homeward way.

LEBEDYAN

One of the principal advantages of hunting, my dear readers, consists in its forcing you to be constantly moving from place to place, which is highly agreeable for a man of leisure. It is true that sometimes, especially in wet weather, it's not over-pleasant to roam over by-roads, to cut across country, to stop every peasant you meet with the question, "Hey, my good man! How are we to get to Mordovka?" and at Mordovka to try to extract from a half-witted peasant woman (the working folk are all in the fields) whether it is far to an inn on the highroad, and how to get to it—and then, when you have gone on ten versts farther, instead of an inn, to come upon the indigent village of Khudobubnovo, to the great amazement of a whole herd of pigs, who have been wallowing up to their ears in the black mud in the middle of the village street, without the slightest anticipation of ever being disturbed. There is no great joy either in having to walk over plank bridges that dance under your feet; to climb down into ravines; to wade across boggy streams; it is not over-pleasant to drive twenty-four hours on end through the sea of green that surrounds the highroads or (which God forbid!) stay for hours stuck in the mud before a striped milestone with the figures 22 on one side and 23 on the other; it is not wholly pleasant to live for weeks together on eggs, milk, and the ryebread patriots affect to be so fond of . . . But there is ample compensation for all these inconveniences and discomforts in pleasures and advantages of another sort. Let us come, though, to our story.

After all I have said above, there is no need to explain to the reader how I happened five years ago to be at Lebedyan just in the very thick of a horse-fair. We hunters may often set off on a fine morning from our more or less ancestral roof, with the full intention of returning there the following evening, and little by little, in pursuit of snipe, may get eventually to the blessed banks of the Pechora. Besides, every lover of the gun and the dog is a passionate admirer of the noblest animal in the world, the horse. And so I turned up at Lebedyan, stopped at the inn, changed my clothes, and went out to

the fair. (The waiter, a thin lanky youth of twenty, had already informed me in a sweet nasal tenor that His Excellency Prince N—, who purchases the chargers for the X. regiment, was staying at their inn; that many other gentlemen had arrived; that gypsies sing in the evenings, and there was *Pan Tvardovsky* on at the theatre; that the horses were fetching good prices; and that there was a fine show of them.)

In the market square there were endless rows of carts drawn up, and behind the carts, horses of every possible kind: racers, stud-horses, dray-horses, cart-horses, stage-horses, and simple peasants' nags. Some of them, fat and sleek, assorted by colours, covered with striped horse-cloths, and tied up short to high racks, darted apprehensive glances backward at the too familiar whips of their owners, the horse-dealers; private owners' horses, sent by steppe-land gentlemen from a hundred or two hundred versts away, in charge of some decrepit old coachman and two or three sturdy stable-boys, shook their long necks, stamped with ennui, and gnawed at the cleats; roan horses of Vyatka breed huddled close to one another; race-horses, dapple-grey, raven, and sorrel, with large hindquarters, flowing tails, and shaggy legs, stood in majestic immobility like lions. Connoisseurs stopped respectfully before them. The avenues formed by the rows of carts were thronged with people of every class, age, and appearance; horse-dealers in long blue coats and tall caps, with sly faces, were on the look-out for purchasers; gypsies, with bulging eyes and curly heads, scurried up and down, like mad, looking into the horses' mouths, lifting up a hoof or a tail, shouting, swearing, acting as go-betweens, casting lots, or hanging about some army horse-contractor in a forage-cap and military cloak with beaver collar. A stalwart Cossack rode up and down on a lanky gelding with the neck of a stag, offering it for sale "in one lot", that is, saddle, bridle, and all. Peasants, in sheepskins torn at the armpits, forced their way desperately through the crowd, or packed themselves by dozens into a cart harnessed to a horse, which was to be "put to the test", or somewhere on one side, with the aid of a wily gypsy, bargained to the point of exhausted, slapping each other's hands a hundred times over, each sticking to his own price, while the subject of their dispute, a wretched little jade covered with a shrunken mat, was blinking quite unmoved, as though it was no concern of hers . . . And, after all, what difference did it make to her who was to have the beating of her? Broad-browed landowners, with dyed moustaches

and an expression of dignity on their faces, in Polish square-topped hats and worsted overcoats trailing from one shoulder, spoke condescendingly to fat merchants in felt hats and green gloves. Officers of different regiments were crowding everywhere; an extra-ordinarily lanky cuirassier of German extraction was languidly inquiring of a lame horse-dealer "what price he was asking for that chestnut animal". A fair-haired young hussar, a boy of nineteen, was choosing a side-horse to match a lean pacer; a post-boy in a low-crowned hat, with a peacock's feather twisted round it, in a brown coat and leather mitts tucked into a narrow, green belt, was looking for a shaft-horse. Coachmen were plaiting the horses' tails, wetting their manes and giving respectful advice to their masters. Those who had completed a stroke of business were hurrying to inn or to pub, according to their class... And all the crowd were moving, shouting, bustling, quarrelling and making it up again, swearing and laughing, all up to their knees in mud. I wanted to buy a set of three horses for my covered trap: mine had begun to show signs of age. I had found two, but had not yet succeeded in picking up a third. After a hotel dinner, which I cannot bring myself to describe (already Aeneas had discovered how painful it is to dwell on sorrows past), I repaired to a so-called *café*, which was the evening resort of the purchasers of cavalry mounts, horse-breeders, and other persons who came to the fair. In the billiard-room, which was plunged in grey floods of tobacco smoke, there were about twenty men. Here were free-and-easy young landlords in Hussar jackets and grey trousers, with long side-burns and little waxed moustaches, staring about them with gentlemanly insolence; other noblemen in kaftans, with extraordinary short necks, and eyes lost in layers of fat, were wheezing with awkwardness; merchants sat quietly a little apart; officers were chatting freely among themselves. At the billiard-table was Prince N—, a young man of two-and-twenty, with a lively and rather contemptuous face, in an unbuttoned surtout, a red silk shirt, and loose velvet pantaloons; he was playing with the retired lieutenant, Victor Khlopakov.

The retired lieutenant, Victor Khlopakov, a small, thin, dark man of thirty, with black hair, brown eyes, and a snub nose, is a diligent frequenter of elections and horse-fairs. He walks with a skip and a hop, waves his hands bent at the elbows with a jovial swagger, cocks his ~~head~~ ^{ear} on one side, and tucks up the sleeves of his military coat, showing the grey cotton lining. Mr. Khlopakov knows how to gain the favour of rich scapegraces from St. Petersburg; smokes, drinks,

and plays cards with them and calls them by their Christian names. What they find to like in him is rather hard to comprehend. He is not clever; he is not amusing; he is not even a buffoon. It is true they treat him with friendly casualness, as a good-natured fellow, but rather a fool; they chum with him for two or three weeks, and then all of a sudden do not recognise him in the street, and he, for his part, does not recognise them either. The chief peculiarity of Khlopakov consists in his continually, for a year, sometimes two at a time, using in season and out of season, one expression, which, though not in the least humorous, for some reason or other makes everyone laugh. Eight years ago he used to say on every occasion, "Umble respects and gratification," and his patrons of that date used always to fall into fits of laughter, and make him repeat "Umble respects and gratification"; then he adopted a more complicated expression: "No, that's too, k'essk'say, beg your pardon," and with the same brilliant success; two years later he had invented a fresh saying: "Ne voo excite vooself pa, man of sin, sewn in a sheepskin," and so on. And strange to say, these, as you see, not overwhelmingly witty phrases keep him in food and drink and clothes. (He has run through his property ages ago, and lives solely upon his friends.) There is, observe, absolutely no other attraction about him; he can, it is true, smoke a hundred pipes of Zhukov tobacco in a day, and when he plays billiards, throws his right leg higher than his head, and while taking aim, shakes his cue affectedly; but, after all, not everyone has a fancy for these accomplishments. He can drink, too . . . but in Russia it is hard to gain distinction as a drinker. In short, his success is a complete riddle to me. There is one thing, perhaps: he is discreet; he has not taste for washing dirty linen in public, never speaks an ill word about anyone.

"Well," I thought, on seeing Khlopakov, "I wonder what his current catchword is?"

The prince hit the white.

"Thirty love," whined a consumptive marker, with a dark face and rings of lead under his eyes.

The prince sent the yellow with a crash into the farthest pocket.

"Ah!" a stoutish merchant, sitting in the corner at a tottering little one-legged table, boomed approvingly from the depths of his chest, and immediately was overcome by confusion at his own presumption. But luckily no one noticed him. He drew a long breath, and stroked his beard.

"Thirty-six love!" the marker shouted in a nasal voice.

"Well, what do you say to that, old man?" the prince asked Khlopakov.

"What! Rrrakalion, of course, simply rrrakalion!"

The prince roared with laughter.

"What? What? Say it again."

"Rrrrakalion!" repeated the retired lieutenant complacently.

"So that's the catchword!" thought I.

The prince sent the red into the pocket.

"Oh! that's not the way, prince, that's not the way," lisped a fair-haired young officer with red eyes, a tiny nose, and a babyish, sleepy face. "You shouldn't play like that... you ought to have... not that way!"

"Eh?" the prince queried over his shoulder.

"You ought to have done it... in a triplet."

"Oh, really?" muttered the prince.

"What do you say, prince? Shall we go this evening to hear the gypsies?" the young man hurriedly went on in confusion. "Steshka will sing... Ilyushka..."

The prince vouchsafed no reply.

"Rrrrakalion, old boy," said Khlopakov with a sly wink of his left eye.

And the prince exploded.

"Thirty-nine to love," sang out the marker.

"Love!... just look, I'll do the trick with that yellow." Khlopakov, shaking his cue in his hand, took aim, and missed.

"Eh, rrrakalion," he cried with vexation.

The prince laughed again.

"What, what, what?"

But Khlopakov, out of coquetry, deigned no reply.

"Your Excellency made a miss," observed the marker. "Allow me to chalk the cue... Forty love."

"Yes, gentlemen," said the prince, addressing the whole company, and not looking at any one in particular, "you know, Verzhembitskaya must be called before the curtain tonight."

"To be sure, to be sure, of course," several voices cried in rivalry, amazingly flattered at the chance of answering the prince's speech, "Verzhembitskaya, to be sure..."

"Verzhembitskaya's an excellent actress, far superior to Sopnyakova," whined an ugly little man in the corner, with moustaches and

spectacles. Luckless wretch! He was secretly pining for Sopnyakova, but the prince did not even vouchsafe him a look.

"Wai-ter, hey, a pipe!" a tall gentleman, with regular features and a most majestic manner—in fact, with all the external symptoms of a card-sharper—muttered into his cravat.

A waiter ran for a pipe, and when he came back, announced to the prince that the coachman Baklaga was asking for him.

"Ah! Tell him to wait a minute and take him some vodka!"

"Yes, sir."

Baklaga, as I was told afterwards, was the name of a youthful, handsome, and excessively spoiled coachman; the prince loved him, made him presents of horses, raced him, spent whole nights with him. Today you would not know this same prince, who was once a rake and a scapegrace. How correct of dress, how finely perfumed, how supercilious! How preoccupied with his government post—and, above all, how prudent and judicious!

However, the tobacco smoke had begun to make my eyes smart. After hearing Khlopakov's exclamation and the prince's chuckle one last time, I went off to my room, where, on a narrow, hair-stuffed sofa pressed into hollows, with a high, curved back, my man had already made me up a bed.

The next day I went out to look at the horses in the stables, and began with the famous horse-dealer Sitnikov's. I went through a gate into a yard strewn with sand. Before a wide open stable door stood the horse-dealer himself—a tall, stout man, no longer young, in a hareskin coat, with a raised turnover collar. Catching sight of me, he moved slowly to meet me, held his cap in both hands above his head, and in a sing-song voice brought out:

"Ah, our respects to you. You'd like to have a look at the horses, may be?"

"Yes; I've come to look at the horses."

"And what sort of horses, precisely, I make bold to ask?"

"Show me what you have."

"With pleasure."

We went into the stable. Some white dogs got up from the hay and ran up to us, wagging their tails, and a long-bearded old goat walked away with an air of displeasure; three stable-boys, in good but greasy sheepskins, bowed to us without speaking. To right and to left, in horse-boxes raised above the ground, stood nearly thirty horses, groomed to perfection. Pigeons fluttered cooing about the rafters.

"What, now, do you want a horse for? For driving or for breeding?" Sitnikov inquired of me.

"Oh, I'll see both sorts."

"To be sure, to be sure," the horse-dealer commented, dwelling on each syllable. "Petya, show the gentleman Ermine."

We came out into the yard.

"But won't you let them bring you a bench out of the horse? You don't want to sit down? As you please."

There was the thud of hoofs on the boards, the crack of a whip, and Petya, a swarthy fellow of forty, marked by small-pox, popped out of the stable with a rather well-shaped grey stallion, made it rear, ran twice round the yard with it, and adroitly pulled it up at the right place. Ermine stretched himself, snorted, raised his tail, shook his head, and looked sideways at us.

"He knows his job," I thought.

"Give him his head, give him his head," said Sitnikov, and he stared at me.

"What may you think of him?" he inquired at last.

"The horse's not bad—the forelegs aren't quite sound."

"His legs are first-rate!" Sitnikov rejoined, with an air of conviction. "And his hindquarters . . . just look, sir . . . broad as an oven—you could sleep up there."

"His pasterns are too long."

"Long! Mercy on us! Start him, Petya, start him, but at a trot, a trot . . . don't let him gallop."

Again Petya ran round the yard with Ermine. None of us spoke for a while.

"There, lead him back," said Sitnikov, "and show us Falcon."

Falcon, a gaunt beast of Dutch breed with sloping hindquarters, as black as a beetle, turned out to be a little better than Ermine. He was one of those beasts of whom fanciers say that "they go chopping and mincing and dancing about", meaning thereby that they prance and throw out their forelegs to right and to left without making much headway. Middle-aged merchants have a great fancy for such horses; their action recalls the swaggering gait of a smart waiter; they do well in single harness for an after-dinner drive; with mincing paces and curved neck they zealously draw a clumsy droshky laden with an overfed coachman, a depressed, dyspeptic merchant, and his lymphatic wife, in a blue silk mantle, with a lilac kerchief over her head. Falcon, too, I declined. Sitnikov showed me several more horses . . .



Turgenev's drawings of the Viardot family for a "Portrait Game" which required the players to draw portraits of people and give them amusing captions.



Pauline Viardot's house in Courtavenel, near Paris. The drawing was made by her in ink in 1859. In the autumn and winter of 1847 Turgenev wrote here some of the stories for *A Hunter's Sketches*.



Prosper Mérimée (1803–1870), a classic of French literature, who translated Turgenev's works into French and was a friend of his. Photograph



George Sand (Aurore Dudevant, 1804-1876), the famous French authoress. She was Turgenev's friend and a great admirer of Turgenev's works, especially *A Hunter's Sketches*, and corresponded with him regularly over a course of many years. This photograph was taken at the end of the 1860s or the beginning of the 1870s.



Paris during the revolution of 1848 Turgenev was there at the time, and later put his recollections of the events in two articles captioned *The Man in the Grey Spectacles* and *Sent by Our People*



Paris A view of les Grands Boulevards Colour lithograph 1860s



The Hamlet of Schigri Uyezd a pencil drawing made by Turgenev during his work on *A Hunter's Sketches*



P Sokolov's illustration for *The Tryst* 1891/92



P Sokolov's illustration for *Biryuk*, 1891-92, a story which Turgenev often read in public



V Makovsky's illustration for *Chertopkhanov and Nedopyuskin*, 1860-70



The first edition of *A Hunter's Sketches*, in two volumes, Moscow, 1852. In this edition Turgenev placed the stories in a different order than they had appeared in magazines.



A caricature by Turgenev's friend Lev Vaksel, 1852, showing Turgenev in leg irons (second from left), and Myslin-Pushkin, (left), director of the St. Petersburg Board of Education, supervising policemen who burn *A Hunter's Sketches*.



Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852), one of the greatest Russian writers, who headed the realistic school in Russian literature Drawing by E Dmitriev-Mamonov, 1852



Alexei Tolstoy (1817-1875) a poet. Using the connections he had at court he helped to bring Turgenev back from exile.



The detention house in St. Petersburg where in 1852 Turgenev was kept for a month before he was exiled to his country estate.



The small house in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo where Turgenev lived during his exile.



P. Boklevsky's watercolour illustration for *Mumu* which Turgenev wrote in 1852 while he was in the detention house.



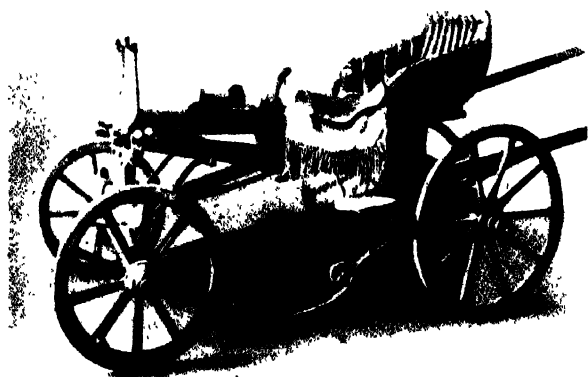
Mtsensk, the nearest town to Spasskoye-Lutovinovo. From a photograph taken at the beginning of the century.



The environs of Spasskoye-Lutovinovo. This pond is described in the novel *Rudin*. A recent photograph.



A view of Bolkhov, an uyezd town not far from Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, where Turgenev often went. This photograph, taken at the end of last century, is published for the first time.



Turgenev's droshky, photographed in 1914.



Afanasy Fet (1820-1892), a poet, photographed in the 1850s.



Fyodor Tyutchev (1803-1873), a poet. Turgenev helped both Fet and Tyutchev to get their first collections of poems brought out in book form.



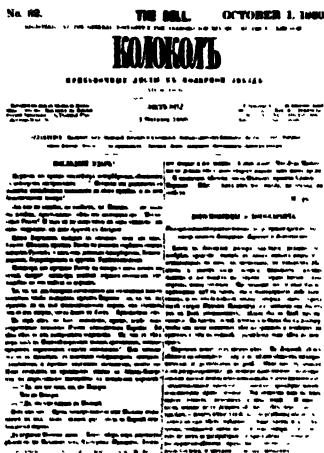
Russian mid-nineteenth century writers who contributed to the democratic journal *Sovremennik*. V. Timm's lithograph (1857) shows (top row, left to right) Ivan Turgenev, Vladimir Sollogub, Lev Tolstoy; (bottom row) Nikolai Nekrassov, Dmitry Grigorovich and Ivan Panayev.



St. Petersburg. This old photograph shows the editorial office of *Sovremennik*.



Russian mid-nineteenth century authors and journalists (top row, left to right): Pavel Melnikov-Pechersky, Yakov Polonsky, Ivan Goncharov; (bottom row) Andrei Krayevsky, Alexander Druzhinin, and Alexei Pissemsky.



Kolokol (The Bell), the newspaper published in London by Alexander Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev from 1857 to 1867. Turgenev gave every support to the newspaper and was one of its correspondents. V.I. Lenin wrote: "*Kolokol* (1857-67) championed the emancipation of the peasants with might and main. The slavish silence was broken."



Alexander Herzen (1812-1870), Russian writer and public figure (right), and Nikolai Ogarev (1813-1877), a poet (left). Photograph by Meier brothers, London, 1860.



Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), the Scots essayist and historian whom Turgenev met in London through Herzen.



London. From an engraving by T. Barber, 1829.

One at last, a dapple-grey beast of Voyerikov breed, took my fancy. I could not restrain my satisfaction, and patted him on the withers. Sitnikov at once feigned absolute indifference.

"Well, does he go well in harness?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes," answered the horse-dealer carelessly.

"Can I see him?"

"If you like, certainly. Hi, Kuzya, put Pursuer into the droshky!"

Kuzya, the jockey, a real master of horsemanship, drove three times past us up and down the street. The horse went well, without changing its pace or shambling; it had a free action, held its tail high, and covered the ground well.

"And what are you asking for him?"

Sitnikov asked an impossible price. We began bargaining on the spot in the street, when suddenly a splendidly matched team of three posting-horses flew, with a great clatter, round the corner and drew up sharply at the gates before Sitnikov's house. In the smart trap sat Prince N—; beside him Khlopakov. Baklaga was driving... and how he drove! He could have driven them through an ear-ring, the rascal! The bay trace-horses, small, keen, black-eyed, black-legged beasts, were trembling with impatience; a whistle, and off they would bolt! The dark-bay shaft-horse stood firmly, its neck arched like a swan's, its breast forward, its legs like arrows, shaking its head and blinking proudly... They were splendid! The tsar Ivan the Terrible could not wish for a finer turn-out for an Easter procession!

"Your Excellency, please to come in!" cried Sitnikov.

The prince leaped out of the trap. Khlopakov slowly descended on the other side.

"Good morning, friend... any horses?"

"You may be sure we have horses for Your Excellency! Pray walk in. Petya, bring out Peacock! And let them get Favourite ready, too. And with you, sir," he went on, turning to me, "we'll settle matters another time... Fomka, a bench for His Excellency."

From a special stable, which I had not at first observed, they led out Peacock. A powerful dark-sorrel horse, Peacock seemed to fly across the yard with all its legs in the air. Sitnikov even turned away his head and blinked.

"Uh, rrakalion!" piped Khlopakov. "Zhaymsah."

The prince laughed.

Peacock was stopped with difficulty; he dragged the stableman about the yard before at last he was pushed against the wall. He

snorted, started and reared, while Sitnikov teased him, brandishing a whip at him.

"What are you looking at, you? Now there! Oo!" said the horse-dealer with caressing menace, unable to refrain from admiring his horse himself.

"How much?" asked the prince.

"For Your Excellency, five thousand."

"Three."

"Impossible, Your Excellency, upon my word."

"I tell you three, rrakalion," put in Khlopakov.

I went away without staying to see the end of the bargaining. At the farthest corner of the street I noticed a large sheet of paper fixed on the gate of a little grey house. At the top there was a pen-and-ink sketch of a horse with a tail of the shape of a pipe and an endless neck, and below the hoofs were the following words, written in an old-fashioned hand:

"Here are for sale horses of various colours brought to the Lebedyan fair from the celebrated steppes stud of Anastasy Ivanich Chernobai, landholder of Tambov Gubernia. These horses are of excellent form; broken in to perfection, and free from vice. Purchasers will kindly ask for Anastasy Ivanich himself; should Anastasy Ivanich be absent, then ask for Nazar Kubishkin, the coachman. Gentlemen, kindly honour an old man."

I stopped. Come, I thought, let's have a look at the horses of the celebrated steppe breeder, Mr. Chernobai.

I was about to go in at the gate, but found that, contrary to the common usage, it was locked. I knocked.

"Who's there? A customer?" whined a woman's voice.

"Yes."

"Coming, sir, coming."

The gate was opened. I beheld a peasant woman of fifty, bareheaded, in boots, and a sheepskin worn open.

"Please to come in, kind sir, and I'll go at once and tell Anastasy Ivanich... Nazar, hey, Nazar!"

"What?" mumbled an old man's voice from the stable.

"Get the horses ready; here's a customer."

The old woman ran into the house.

"A customer, a customer," Nazar grumbled in response, "I've not washed all their tails yet."

"Oh, Arcadia!" thought I.

"Good day, sir, pleased to see you," I heard a rich, pleasant voice saying behind my back. I looked round; before me, in a long-skirted blue coat, stood an old man of medium height, with white hair, a friendly smile, and fine blue eyes.

"You want a horse? By all means, my dear sir, by all means. But won't you step in and drink a cup of tea with me first?"

I declined and thanked him.

"Well, well, as you please. You must excuse me, my dear sir; you see I'm old-fashioned. Everything with me is done in a plain way, you know. Nazar, hey, Nazar!" he added, not raising his voice, but prolonging each syllable.

Nazar, a wrinkled old man with a little hawk nose and a wedge-shaped beard, showed himself at the stable door.

"What sort of horses is it you're wanting, my dear sir?" resumed Mr. Chernobai.

"Not too expensive; for driving my covered trap."

"To be sure, we have got them to suit you, to be sure. Nazar, Nazar, show the gentleman the grey gelding, you know, that stands at the farthest corner, and the sorrel with the star, or else the other sorrel—foal of Beauty, you know."

Nazar went back into the stable.

"And bring them out by their halters just as they are," Mr. Chernobai shouted after him. "You won't find things with me, my good sir," he went on, with a clear mild gaze into my face, "as they are with the horse-dealers; confound their tricks! They use all sorts of drugs, salt and malted grains; God forgive them! But with me, you will see, sir, everything's above-board; no underhandedness."

The horses were led out; I did not care for them.

"Well, well, take them back, in God's name," said Anastasy Ivanich. "Show us the others."

Others were shown. At last I picked out one, rather a cheap one. We began to bargain over the price. Mr. Chernobai did not get excited; he spoke so reasonably, with such dignity, calling on God to be his witness, "honouring" the old man; I gave him earnest-money.

"Well, now," observed Anastasy Ivanich, "allow me to give over the horse to you from hand to hand, after the old custom. You will thank me for him—as sound and fresh as a nut, a true child of the steppes! Goes well in any harness."

He crossed himself, laid the skirt of his coat over his hand, took the halter, and handed me the horse.

"You're his master now, with God's blessing. And you still won't take a cup of tea?"

"No, I thank you heartily; it's time I was going home."

"That's as you think best. And shall my coachman lead the horse after you?"

"Yes, now, if you please."

"By all means, my dear sir, by all means. Vassily, hey, Vassily! Step along with the gentleman, lead the horse, and take the money from him. Well, good-bye, my good sir; God bless you."

"Good-bye, Anastasy Ivanich."

They led the horse home for me. The next day he turned out to be broken-winded and lame. I tried having him put in harness; the horse backed, and if one gave him a flick with the whip he jibbed, kicked, and positively lay down. I set off at once to Mr. Chernobai's. I inquired: "At home?"

"Yes."

"What's the meaning of this?" said I. "Here you've sold me a broken-winded horse."

"Broken-winded? God forbid!"

"Yes, and he's lame too, and vicious besides."

"Lame! I know nothing about it: your coachman must have ill-treated him somehow. But before God, I—"

"Look here, Anastasy Ivanich, as things stand, you ought to take him back."

"No, my good sir, I can't, don't be angry; once gone out of the yard, is done with. You should have looked before, sir."

I understood what that meant, accepted my fate, laughed, and walked off. Luckily, I had not paid very dear for the lesson.

Two days later I left, and in a week I was again at Lebedyan on my way home. In the *café* I found almost the same persons, and again I came upon Prince N—at billiards. But the usual change in the fortunes of Mr. Khlopakov had taken place in this interval: the fair-haired young officer had supplanted him in the prince's favours. The poor retired lieutenant once more tried letting off his catchword in my presence, on the chance it might succeed as before; but, far from smiling, the prince positively scowled and shrugged his shoulders. Mr. Khlopakov looked downcast, shrank into a corner, and began furiously filling himself a pipe...

TATYANA BORISOVNA AND HER NEPHEW

Give me your hand, gentle reader, and come along with me. It is glorious weather; there is a tender blue in the May sky; the smooth young leaves of the willows glisten as though they had been polished; the wide even road is all covered with that short grass with the reddish stalk that the sheep are so fond of nibbling; to right and to left, over the long sloping hillsides, the green rye is softly waving; the shadows of small clouds glide in thin long streaks over it. In the distance is the dark mass of forests, the glitter of ponds, yellow patches of villages; larks in hundreds are soaring, singing, diving headlong with outstretched necks, hopping about the clods; the rooks on the high-road stand still, look at you, press themselves close to the earth, let you drive close up, and with two hops lazily move aside. On a hill beyond a ravine a peasant is ploughing; a piebald colt, with a cropped tail and short ruffled mane, is running on unsteady legs after its mother; its shrill whinnying reaches us. We drive on into the birch copse, and drink in the strong, fresh fragrance. We soon reach the edge of a village. The coachman gets down; the horses snort; the trace-horses look round; the shaft horse switches his tail, and leans his head against the wooden yoke; the big gate opens creaking; the coachman seats himself . . . Drive on! The village is before us. Passing five homesteads, and turning off to the right, we descend into a hollow and drive along a dyke; on the farther side of a small pond, behind the round tops of the lilacs and apple-trees, a deal roof, once red, with two chimneys, comes into sight; the coachman keeps along the fence to the left, and to the frantic hoarse barking of three aged mongrels he drives through the wide-open gates, whisks smartly round the broad courtyard past the stable and the barn, gallantly salutes the old housekeeper, who has stepping sideways over the high lintel in the open doorway of the storehouse, and pulls up at last

before the steps of a dark house with light windows... We are at Tatyana Borisovna's. And here she is herself opening the window and nodding to us.

"Good day, ma'am!"

Tatyana Borisovna is a woman of fifty, with large, prominent grey eyes, a rather blunt nose, rosy cheeks and a double chin. Her face breathes friendliness and kindness. She was once married, but was soon left a widow. Tatyana Borisovna is a very remarkable woman. She lives on her little property, never leaving it, mixes very little with her neighbours, sees and likes none but young people. She was the daughter of very poor gentry, and received no education; in other words, she does not know French and has never been in Moscow—and in spite of all these defects, she is so good and simple in her manners, so broad in her sympathies and ideas, so little infected with the ordinary prejudices of country ladies of small means, that one positively cannot help marvelling at her. Indeed, a woman who lives all the year round in the country and does not talk scandal, nor whine, nor curtesy, is never flurried, nor depressed, nor in a flutter of curiosity, is a real marvel! She usually wears a grey taffeta gown and a white cap with lilac streamers; she is fond of good food, but not to excess; all the preserving, pickling, and salting she leaves to her housekeeper. "What does she do all day long?" you will ask. "Does she read?" No, she doesn't read, and, to tell the truth, books are not written for her. If there are no visitors with her, Tatyana Borisovna sits by herself at the window knitting a stocking in winter; in summertime she is in the garden, planting and watering her flowers, playing for hours together with kittens, or feeding her doves. She does not take much part in the management of her estate. But if a visitor pays her a call—some young neighbour whom she likes—Tatyana Borisovna is all life directly; she makes him sit down, pours him out tea, listens to his chat, laughs, sometimes pats his cheek, but says little herself; in trouble or sorrow she comforts and gives good advice. How many people have confided their family secrets and the griefs of their hearts to her, and have wept on her shoulder! She would sit opposite her visitor, leaning lightly on her elbow, and looks with such sympathy into his face, smiles so affectionately, that he cannot help feeling: "What a dear, good woman you are, Tatyana Borisovna! Let me tell you what is burdening my heart." One feels happy and warm in her small, snug rooms; in her house it is always, so to speak, fine weather. Tatyana Borisovna is a wonderful woman,

but no one wonders at her; her sound good sense, her breadth and firmness, her warm sympathy in the joys and sorrows of others—in a word, all her qualities are so innate in her; they are no effort to her . . . One cannot imagine her otherwise, and so one feels no need to thank her. She is particularly fond of watching the pranks and follies of young people; she folds her hands under her bosom, throws back her head, puckers up her eyes, and sits smiling at them, then all of a sudden she heaves a sigh and says, "Ah, my children, my children!" Sometimes one longs to go up to her, take hold of her hand, and say, "Let me tell you, Tatyana Borisovna, you don't know your own merit; for all your simplicity and lack of learning, you're an extraordinary creature!" Her very name has a sweet familiar ring; one is glad to utter it; it calls up a kindly smile at once. How often, for instance, have I chanced to ask a peasant, "Tell me, my friend, how am I to get to Grachovka?" let us say. "Well, sir, you go on first to Vyazovoye, and from there to Tatyana Borisovna's, and from Tatyana Borisovna's anyone will show you the way." And at the name of Tatyana Borisovna the peasant wags his head in quite a special way. Her household is small, in accordance with her means. The house, the laundry, the stores and the kitchen are in the charge of the housekeeper, Agafya, once her nurse, a good-natured, tearful, toothless creature; she has under her two stalwart girls with stout crimson cheeks like Antonovka apples. The duties of valet, butler, and waiter are filled by Polikarp, an extraordinary old man of seventy, a queer fellow, full of erudition, once a violinist and worshipping of Viotti, with a personal hostility to Napoleon, or as he calls him, Bonaparty, and a passion for nightingales. He always keeps five or six of the latter in his room; in early spring he will sit for whole days by the cage, waiting for the first trill, and when he hears it, he covers his face with his hands and moans, "Oh, piteous, piteous!" and sheds tears in floods. Polikarp has, to help him, his grandson Vasya, a curly-headed, sharp-eyed boy of twelve; Polikarp adores him, and grumbles at him from morning till night. He undertakes his education too. "Vasya," he says, "say Bonaparty was a scoundrel." "And what'll you give me, Grand-dad?" "What'll I give you? . . . I'll give you nothing . . . Why, what are you? Aren't you a Russian?" "I'm a Mtsanian, Grand-dad; I was born in Mtsensk." "Oh, silly dunce! But where is Mtsensk?" "How can I tell?" "Mtsensk's in Russia, silly!" "Well, what then if it is in Russia?" "What then? Why, His Highness the late Prince Mikhail Illarionovich Golenischev-Kutuzov

of Smolensk, with God's aid, graciously drove Bonaparty out of the Russian territories. It's on that event the song was composed: 'Bonaparty's in no mood to dance, he's lost the garters he brought from France . . .' Do you understand? He liberated your fatherland." "And what's that to do with me?" "Ah! You silly boy! Why, if His Highness Prince Mikhail Illarionovich hadn't driven out Bonaparty, some mounseer would have been beating you about the head with a stick this minute. He's come up to you like this, and say, 'Koman voo porty voo?' and then a box on the ear!" "But I'd give him one in the belly with my fist." "But he'd go on: 'Bonzhur, bonzhur, veny ici,' and then a pull on your forelock." "And I'd give him one in his legs, his bandy legs." "You're quite right, their legs are bandy . . . Well, but suppose he tied your hands?" "I wouldn't let him; I'd call Mikhei the coachman to help me." "Right you are Vasya, the Frenchy is no match for Mikhei?" "Of course, he isn't! See how strong Mikhei is!" "Well, and what would you do with him?" "We'd get whack him on the back, we would." "And he'd shout, 'Pardon, pardon, seevooplay!' "We'd tell him, 'None of your seevooploys, you old Frenchy!' "Bravo, Vasya! . . . Well, now then, shout, 'Bonaparty's a scoundrel!'" "But you must give me some sugar!" "You scamp!"

Of the neighbouring ladies Tatyana Borisovna sees very little; they do not care about going to see her, and she does not know how to amuse them; the sound of their chatter sends her to sleep; she starts, tries to keep her eyes open, and drops off again. Tatyana Borisovna is not fond of women altogether. One of her friends, a good, harmless young man, had a sister, an old maid of thirty-eight, a good-natured creature, but exaggerated, affected, and ecstatic. Her brother had often talked to her of their neighbour. One fine morning our old maid has her horse saddled, and, without a word to anyone, sallies off to Tatyana Borisovna's. In her long habit, a hat on her head, a green veil and floating curls, she entered the hall, and passing by the panic-stricken Vasya, who took her for a mermaid, ran into the drawing-room. Tatyana Borisovna, terrified, tried to rise, but her legs sank under her. "Tatyana Borisovna," began the visitor in a supplicating voice, "forgive my temerity; I am the sister of your friend, Alexei Nikolayevich K— and I have heard so much about you from him that I resolved to make your acquaintance." "Greatly honoured," muttered the bewildered lady. The sister flung off her hat, shook her curls, seated herself near Tatyana Borisovna, took her by the hand. "So this is she," she began in a pensive voice fraught

with feeling. "This is that sweet, clear, noble, holy being! This is she! That woman at once so simple and so deep! How glad I am! How glad I am! How we shall love each other! I can breathe easily at last. I always fancied her just so," she added in a whisper, her eyes riveted on the eyes of Tatyana Borisovna. "You are not angry with me, are you, my dear kind friend?" "Really, I'm delighted! Won't you have some tea?" The lady smiled patronisingly. "*Wie wahr, wie unreflektirt*," she murmured as it were to herself. "Let me embrace you, my dear one!"

The old maid stayed three hours at Tatyana Borisovna's, never ceasing talking an instant. She tried to explain to her new acquaintance what a boon to humanity she was. Directly after the unexpected visitor had departed, the poor lady went to the bath house, after which she drank some lime-flower water, and took to her bed. But the next day the old maid came back, stayed four hours, and left, promising to come to see Tatyana Borisovna every day. Her idea, please to observe, was to develop, to complete the education of so rich a nature, to use her own expression, and she would probably have really been the death of her, if she had not, in the first place, been utterly disillusioned as regards her brother's friend within a fortnight, and secondly, fallen in love with a young student on a visit in the neighbourhood, with whom she at once rushed into a fervid and active correspondence; in her missives she consecrated him, as the manner of such is, to a noble, holy life, offered herself "wholly" as a sacrifice, asked only for the name of sister, launched into endless descriptions of nature, made allusions to Goethe, Schiller, Bettina and German philosophy, and drove the luckless young man at last to the blackest desperation. But youth asserted itself; one fine morning he woke up with such a furious hatred for "his sister and best of friends" that he almost beat up his valet in his passion, and was snappish for a long while after at the slightest allusion to elevated and disinterested love. From that time forth Tatyana Borisovna began to avoid all intimacy with ladies of the neighbourhood more than ever.

Alas! Nothing is lasting on this earth. All I have related as to the way of life of my kind-hearted neighbour is a thing of the past; the peace that used to reign in her house has been destroyed for ever. For more than a year now a nephew, an artist from St. Petersburg, has been living with her. This is how it came about.

Eight years ago, there was living with Tatyana Borisovna a boy

of twelve, an orphan, the son of her brother. This boy, Andrei, had large, clear, humid eyes, a tiny little mouth, a regular nose, and a fine lofty brow. He spoke in a low, sweet voice, was neat and well-behaved, attentive and coaxing with visitors, kissed his auntie's hand with an orphan's sensibility; and one hardly had time to show oneself before he had put an arm-chair for one. He had no mischievous tricks; he was never noisy; he would sit by himself in a corner with a book, and with such sedateness and propriety, never even leaning back in his chair. When a visitor came in, Andrei would get up, with a decorous smile and a flush; when the visitor went away he would sit down again, pull out of his pocket a brush and a looking-glass, and brush his hair. From his earliest years he had shown a taste for drawing. Whenever he got hold of a piece of paper, he would ask Agafya the housekeeper for a pair of scissors at once, carefully cut a square piece out of the paper, trace a border round it and set to work; he would draw an eye with an immense pupil, or a Grecian nose, or a house with a chimney and smoke coming out of it in the shape of a corkscrew, a dog, *en face*, looking rather like a bench, or a tree with two pigeons on it, and would sign it: "Drawn by Andrei Belovzorov, such a day in such a year, in the village of Maliye Briki." He used to toil with special industry for a fortnight before Tatyana Borisovna's birthday; he was the first to present his congratulations and offer her a roll of paper tied up with a pink ribbon. Tatyana Borisovna would kiss her nephew and undo the knot; the roll was unfolded and presented to the inquisitive gaze of the spectator, a round, boldly sketched temple, with columns and an altar in the centre; on the altar lay a burning heart and a wreath, while above, on a curling scroll, was inscribed in clear characters: "To my aunt and benefactress, Tatyana Borisovna Bogdanova, from her dutiful and loving nephew, as a token of his deepest affection." Tatyana Borisovna would kiss him again and give him a silver ruble. She did not, though, feel any great affection for him; Andrei's fawning ways were not quite to her taste. Meanwhile, Andrei was growing up; Tatyana Borisovna began to be anxious about his future. An unexpected incident solved the difficulty to her.

One day eight years ago she received a visit from a certain Mr. Benevolensky, Pyotr Mikhailich, a collegiate councillor with a decoration. Mr. Benevolensky had at one time held an official post in the nearest uyezd town, and had been assiduous in his visits to Tatyana Borisovna; then he had moved to St. Petersburg, got into a

ministry, and attained a rather important position, and on one of the numerous journeys he took in the discharge of his official duties, he remembered his old friend, and came back to see her, with the intention of taking a rest for two days from his official labours "in the bosom of nature". Tatyana Borisovna greeted him with her usual cordiality, and Mr. Benevolensky . . . But before we proceed with the rest of the story, gentle reader, let us introduce this new personage to you.

Mr. Benevolensky was a stoutish man, of middle height and mild appearance, with short legs and fat hands; he wore a roomy and excessively spruce frock-coat, a high broad cravat, snow-white linen, a gold chain on his silk waistcoat, a gem-ring on his forefinger, and a white wig on his head; he spoke softly and persuasively, trod noiselessly, and had an amiable smile, an amiable look in his eyes, and an amiable ways of settling his chin in his cravat; he was, in fact, an amiable person altogether. God had given him a heart, too, of the softest; he was easily moved to tears and to transports; moreover, he was all aglow with disinterested passion for art: disinterested it certainly was, for Mr. Benevolensky, if the truth must be told, knew absolutely nothing about art. One is set wondering, indeed, whence, by virtue of what mysterious incomprehensible forces, this passion had come upon him. He was, to all appearance, a practical, even prosaic person . . . however, we have a good many such people among us in Russia.

Their devotion to art and artists produces in these people an inexpressible mawkishness; it is distressing to keep company with them and to talk to them; they are perfect logs smeared with honey. They never, for instance, call Raphael Raphael, or Correggio Correggio; "the divine Sanzio, the incomparable Allegri," they murmur. Every pretentious, conceited, home-bred mediocrity they hail as a genius; "the blue sky of Italy", "the lemons of the South", "the balmy breezes of the banks of the Brenta", are for ever on their lips. "Ah, Vanya, Vanya," or "Oh, Sasha, Sasha," they say to one another with deep feeling, "we must away to the South . . . we are Greeks in soul—ancient Greeks." One may observe them at exhibitions before the works of some Russian painters (these gentlemen, it should be noted, are for the most part passionate patriots). First they step back a couple of paces, and throw back their heads; then they go up to the picture again; their eyes are suffused with an oily moisture. "There you have it, my God!" they say at last, in voices broken with

emotion. "There's soul, soul! Ah! What feeling, what feeling! Ah, what soul he has put into it! What a mass of soul! . . . And the concept! What masterly concept!" And, oh! The pictures in their own drawing-rooms! Oh, the artists that come to them in the evenings, drink tea, and listen to their conversation! And the views in perspective they paint them of their rooms, with a broom in the foreground, a little heap of dust on the polished floor, a yellow samovar on a table near the window, and the master of the house himself in skull-cap and dressing-gown, with a brilliant streak of sunlight falling on his cheek! Oh, the longhaired nurslings of the Muses, wearing spasmodic and contemptuous smiles, that cluster about them! Oh, the young ladies, with faces of greenish pallor, who squeal over their pianos! For that is the established rule with us in Russia; a man cannot be devoted to one art alone—he must have them all. And so it is not to be wondered at that these gentlemen extend their powerful patronage to Russian literature also, especially to dramatic literature . . . The *Jacob Sannazars* are written for them; the struggle of unappreciated talent against the whole world, depicted a thousand times over, still moves them profoundly . . .

The day after Mr. Benevolensky's arrival, Tatyana Borisovna told her nephew at tea-time to show their guest his drawings. "Why, does he draw?" said Mr. Benevolensky with some surprise, and he turned with interest to Andrei. "Yes, he draws," said Tatyana Borisovna, "he's so fond of it! and he does it all alone, without a master." "Ah! Show me, show me," cried Mr. Benevolensky. Andrei, blushing and smiling, brought the visitor his sketch-book. Mr. Benevolensky began leafing through it with the air of a connoisseur. "Good, young man," he pronounced at last, "good, very good." And he patted Andrei on the head. Andrei intercepted his hand and kissed it. "Fancy, now, a talent like that! I congratulate you, Tatyana Borisovna." "But what am I to do, Pyotr Mikhailich? I can't get him a teacher here. To have one from town is a great expense; our neighbours, the Artamonovs, have a drawing-master, and they say an excellent one, but his mistress forbids his giving lessons to outsiders—says he'll ruin his taste." "Hmm," pronounced Mr. Benevolensky; he pondered and looked askance at Andrei. "Well, we will talk it over," he added suddenly, rubbing his hands. The same day he begged Tatyana Borisovna for an interview with her alone. They shut themselves up together. Half an hour later they called Andrei—Andrei went in. Mr. Benevolensky was standing at the window with a slight flush on his face and a

beaming expression. Tatyana Borisovna was sitting in a corner wiping her eyes.

"Come, Andrei," she said at last, "you must thank Pyotr Mikhailich; he will take you under his protection; he will take you to Petersburg."

Andrei almost fainted on the spot.

"Tell me candidly," began Mr. Benevolensky, in a voice filled with dignity and patronising indulgence. "Do you want to be an artist, young man? Do you feel yourself dedicated to the holy service of Art?"

"I want to be an artist, Pyotr Mikhailich," Andrei declared in a trembling voice.

"I am delighted, if so it be. It will, of course," continued Mr. Benevolensky, "be hard for you to part from your esteemed aunt; you must feel the liveliest gratitude to her."

"I adore my auntie," Andrei interrupted, blinking.

"Of course, of course, that's readily understood, and does you great credit; but, on the other hand, consider the pleasure that in the future... your success..."

"Kiss me, Andrei," muttered the kind-hearted lady. Andrei flung himself on her neck. "There, now, thank your benefactor."

Andrei embraced Mr. Benevolensky's stomach, and stretching on tiptoe, reached his hand, which his benefactor was in no great hurry to withdraw, and imprinted a kiss upon it. He had, to be sure, to humour the child, and, after all, he deserved it. Two days later, Mr. Benevolensky departed, taking with him his new *protégé*.

During the first three years of Andrei's absence he wrote pretty often, sometimes enclosing drawings in his letters. From time to time Mr. Benevolensky added a few words, for the most part of approbation; then the letters began to be less and less frequent, and at last ceased altogether. A whole year passed without a word from her nephew; and Tatyana Borisovna was beginning to be uneasy when suddenly she got the following note:

"Dearest Auntie,—Pyotr Mikhailich, my patron, died three days ago. A severe paralytic stroke has deprived me of my sole support. To be sure, I am now twenty. I have made considerable progress during the seven years; I have the greatest confidence in my talent, and can make my living by means of it; I do not despair; but all the same send me, if you can, as soon as convenient, 250 rubles. I kiss your hand and remain..." etc.

Tatyana Borisovna sent her nephew 250 rubles. Two months later he asked for more; she got together every kopeck she had and sent it him. Not six weeks after the second donation he was asking a third time for help, ostensibly to buy paints for a portrait bespoken by Princess Tertereshneva. Tatyana Borisovna refused. "In this case," he wrote to her, "propose coming to you to regain my health in the country." And in May of the same year Andrei did, in fact, return to Maliye Briki.

Tatyana Borisovna did not recognise him at first. From his letter she had expected to see a wasted invalid, and she beheld a stout, broad-shouldered fellow, with a big red face and greasy curly hair. The pale, slender little Andrei had turned into the stalwart Andrei Ivanovich Belovzorov. And it was not only his exterior that was transformed. The modest spruceness, the sedateness and tidiness of his earlier years, was replaced by a careless swagger and quite insufferable slovenliness; he rolled from side to side as he walked, flopped in to easy chairs, put his elbows on the table, lolled, stretched and yawned, and behaved rudely to his aunt and the servants, as much as to say: "I'm an artist, a free Cossack! That's our sort!" Sometimes he did not touch a brush for days; then inspiration, as he called it, would come upon him; then he would swagger about as if he were drunk, clumsy, awkward, and noisy; his cheeks were flushed with a coarse colour, his eyes dull; he would launch into discourses upon his talent, his success, his development, the advance he was making . . . In actual fact, it turned out that he had barely talent enough to produce passable portraits. He was a perfect ignoramus, had read nothing; why should an artist read, indeed? Nature, freedom, poetry are his fitting elements; he need do nothing but shake his curls, talk, and suck away at his eternal cigarette! Russian audacity is a fine thing, but it doesn't suit everyone; and Polezhaevs at second-hand, without the genius, are insufferable beings. Andrei Ivanovich went on living at his aunt's; he did not seem to find the bread of charity bitter, notwithstanding the proverb. Visitors to the house found him a mortal nuisance. He would sit at the piano (for, you must know, there was a piano at Tatyana Borisovna's) and begin strumming "The Swift Troika" with one finger; he would strike chords, bang on the keys, and for hours together howl Varlamov's songs "The Solitary Pine," or "No, doctor, no, don't come to me" disgustingly, his eyes lost among layers of fat and, his cheeks puffed out and tense as drums. Or he would suddenly strike up: "Be still, distracting

passions' tempest!" Tatyana Borisovna would positively shudder.

"It's a strange thing," she observed to me one day, "the songs they compose nowadays; there's something frightful about them; in my day they were very different. We had mournful songs, too, but it was always a pleasure to hear them. For instance:

*Come, come to me in the meadow,
Where I am awaiting thee;
Come, come to me in the meadow,
Where I'm shedding tears for thee...
Alas! thou'rt coming to the meadow,
But too late, dear love, for me!*

Tatyana Borisovna smiled archly.

"I agon-ise, I agon-ise!" yelled her nephew in the next room.

"Be quiet, Andrei!"

"My soul's consumed apart from thee!" the indefatigable singer continued.

Tatyana Borisovna shook her head.

"Ah, these artists! These artists!..."

A year has gone by since then. Belovzorov is still living at his aunt's, and still talking of going back to St. Petersburg. He has grown as broad as he is long in the country. His aunt—who could have imagined such a thing?—idolises him, and the young ladies of the neighbourhood are all in love with him.

Many of her old friends have given up going to Tatyana Borisovna's.

DEATH

I have a neighbour, a young landlord and a young hunter. One fine July morning I rode over to him with a proposition that we should go out grouse-shooting together. He agreed. "Only let's go," he said, "by way of my underwoods to Zusha; I will use the opportunity to have a look at Chaplygino; you know my oak wood; they're felling timber there." "By all means." He ordered his horse to be saddled, put on a green coat with bronze buttons, stamped with a boar's head, a game-bag embroidered in crewel, and a silver flask, slung a brand-new French gun over his shoulder, turned himself about with some satisfaction before the mirror, and called his dog, *Espérance*, a gift from his cousin, an old maid with an excellent heart, but no hair on her head. We started. My neighbour took with him the village constable, Arkhip, a stout, squat man with a square face and jaws of antediluvian proportions, and a steward he had recently hired from the Baltic provinces, a youth of nineteen, thin, flaxen-haired, and short-sighted, with sloping shoulders and a long neck, Herr Gottlieb von der Kock. My neighbour had only recently come into the property. It had come to him by inheritance from an aunt, the widow of a councillor of state Madame Kardon-Katayeva, an excessively stout woman, who even lying in bed sighed and groaned. We reached the underwoods. "You wait for me here in the clearing," said Ardalion Mikhailich (my neighbour), addressing his companions. The German bowed, got off his horse, pulled a book out of his pocket—a novel of Johanna Schopenhauer's, I fancy—and sat down under a bush; Arkhip remained in the sun without stirring a muscle for an hour. We beat about among the bushes, but did not come on a single covey. Ardalion Mikhailich then announced his intention of going on to the wood. I had no faith, somehow, in our luck that day; so I dragged along after him. We got back to the clearing. The German noted the page, got up, put the book in his pocket, and with some difficulty mounted his bob-tailed, broken-winded

mare, who squealed and kicked at the slightest touch; Arkhip shook himself, gave a tug at both reins at once, swung his legs, and at last succeeded in starting his torpid and dejected nag. We set off.

I had been familiar with Ardalion Mikhailich's wood from my childhood. I had often took walks in Chaplygino with my French tutor, Monsieur Désiré Fleury, the kindest of men (who had, however, almost ruined my constitution for life by dosing me with Leroy's mixture every evening). The whole wood consisted of some two or three hundred immense oaks and ash-trees. Their stately, powerful trunks were magnificently black against the transparent golden green of the hazel bushes and mountain ashes; higher up, their wide knotted branches stood out in graceful lines against the clear blue sky, unfolding into a tent overhead; hawks, honey-buzzards and kestrels flew whizzing under the motionless tree-tops; brightly-plumed woodpeckers tapped loudly on stout bark; the blackbird's bell-like trill was heard suddenly in the thick foliage, following on the lilting note of the oriole; in the bushes below was the chirp and twitter of robins, siskins, and chiff-chaffs; finches ran swiftly along the paths; a hare would hop cautiously along the edge of the wood; a squirrel would leap sporting from tree to tree, then suddenly sit still, with its tail over its head. In the grass beside the tall ant-hills in the delicate shade of the lovely, feathery, deep-indented ferns, were violets and lilies of the valley, and mushrooms, russet, yellow, brown, red and crimson; in the patches of grass among the spreading bushes strawberries showed red... And oh, the shade in the wood! In the most stifling heat, at midday, it was like night in the wood; such peace, such fragrance, such freshness... I had spent happy times in Chaplygino, and so, I must own, it was with melancholy feelings I entered the wood I knew so well. The ruinous, snowless winter of 1840 had not spared my old friends, the oaks and the ashes; withered, naked, covered here and there with sickly foliage, they struggled mournfully up above the young growth which "took their place, but could never replace them."*

* In 1840 there were severe frosts, and no snow fell up to the very end of December; all the winter crops were frozen, and many splendid oak forests were destroyed by that merciless winter. It will be hard to replace them; the productive force of the land is apparently diminishing; in the "interdicted" wastelands (visited by processions with holy images, and so not to be touched), instead of the noble trees of former days, birches and aspens grow of themselves; and, indeed, any other method of planting woods is unknown in our country.—*Author's Note.*

Some trees, still covered with leaves below, flung their lifeless, ruined branches upwards, as it were, in reproach and despair; in others, stout, dead, dry branches were thrust out of the midst of foliage still thick, though with none of the luxuriant abundance of old; others had shed thin bark and still others had fallen altogether, and lay rotting like corpses on the ground. And—who could have dreamed of this in former days?—there was no shade—no shade to be found anywhere in Chaplygin wood! “Ah,” I thought, looking at the dying trees: “isn’t it shameful and bitter for you? . . .” Koltsov’s lines occurred to me:

*What has become
Of the mighty voice,
The haughty strength,
The royal stance?
Where is it now,
The wealth of green? . . .*

“How is it, Ardalion Mikhailich,” I began, “that they didn’t fell these trees the very next year? They won’t give for them now a tenth of what they would have given before.”

He merely shrugged his shoulders.

“You should have asked my aunt that; the timber merchants came, offered money down, pressed the matter, in fact.”

“*Mein Gott! Mein Gott!*” von der Kock cried at every step. “Vat a pity, vat a pity!”

What particularly aroused his regrets were the oaks lying on the ground—and, indeed, many a miller would have given a good sum for them. But the constable Arkhip preserved an unruffled composure, and did not indulge in any lamentations; on the contrary, he seemed even to jump over them and crack his whip on them with a certain satisfaction.

We were getting near the place where they were cutting down the trees, when suddenly shouting and hurried talk was heard, following on the crash of a falling tree, and a few instants after a young peasant, pale and dishevelled, dashed out of the thicket towards us.

“What is it? Where are you running!” Ardalion Mikhailich asked him.

He stopped at once.

“Ah, Ardalion Mikhailich, sir, an accident has happened!”

“What is it?”

"Maxim, sir, crushed by a tree."

"How did it happen?... Maxim the foreman?"

"The foreman, sir. We'd started cutting an ash-tree, and he was standing looking on. He stood there a bit, and then off he went to the well for some water—wanted a drink, seemingly—when suddenly the ash-tree began creaking and falling straight upon him. We shout to him 'Run, run, run!...' He should have rushed to one side, but he up and ran straight before him. He was scared, to be sure. The ash-tree hit him with its top branches. But why it fell so soon, the Lord only knows! Perhaps it was rotten at the core."

"And so it crushed Maxim?"

"Yes, sir."

"To death?"

"No, sir, he's still alive—but as good as dead; his arms and leg are crushed. I was running for Seliverstich, for the doctor."

Ardalion Mikhailich told the constable to gallop to the village for Seliverstich, while he himself pushed on at a quick trot to the clearing. I followed him.

We found poor Maxim prostrated on the ground. A dozen peasants were standing about him. We got off our horses. He hardly moaned at all; from time to time he opened his eyes wide, looked round, as though in astonishment, and bit his lips, fast turning blue. The lower part of his face was twitching; his hair was matted on his brow; his breast heaved irregularly: he was dying. The light shade of a young lime-tree glided softly over his face.

We bent down to him. He recognised Ardalion Mikhailich.

"Please, sir," he said to him, barely articulately, "send for the priest... tell... the Lord has punished me... arms, legs, all smashed... today's... Sunday... and I... I... see... didn't let the lads off work."

He ceased, out of breath.

"And my money... for my wife... after deducting... Onisim here knows... whom I... what I owe."

"We've sent for the doctor, Maxim," said my neighbour, "perhaps you will not die yet."

He tried to open his eyes, and with an effort raised the lids.

"No, I'm dying. Here... here it is coming... here it... Forgive me, lads, if in any way..."

"God will forgive you, Maxim Andreich," said the peasants thickly

with one voice, and they took off their caps, "you forgive us!"

He suddenly shook his head despairingly, his breast heaved with a painful effort, and he fell back again.

"We can't let him lie here and die, though," cried Ardalion Mikhailich. "Lads, give us the mat from the cart, and carry him to the hospital."

Two men ran to the cart.

"I bought a horse... yesterday," faltered the dying man, "of Efim... in Sichovka... paid earnest-money... so the horse is mine... Give it... to my wife..."

They began to move him on to the mat. He shuddered all over, like a wounded bird, and stiffened.

"He's dead," muttered the peasants.

We mounted our horses in silence and rode away.

The death of poor Maxim set me musing. How wonderfully indeed the Russian peasant dies! The temper in which he meets his end cannot be called indifference or stolidity; he dies as though he were performing a solemn rite, coolly and simply.

A few years ago a peasant belonging to another neighbour of mine in the country got burnt in the drying shed. (He would have remained there, but a passing townsman pulled him out half-dead; he plunged into a tub of water, and, at a run, broke down the door of the burning shed.) I went to his hut to see him. It was dark, smoky, stifling, in the hut. I asked, "Where is the sick man?" "There, sir, on the stove," his wife answered me in a sorrowful sing-song. I went up; the peasant was lying covered with a sheepskin, breathing heavily. "Well, how do you feel?" The injured man stirred; burned all over, within sight of death as he was, he tried to rise. "Lie still, lie still... Well, how are you?" "In a bad way, surely," said he. "Are you in pain?" No answer. "Is there anything you want?" No answer. "Shall I send you some tea, or anything?" "There's no need." I moved away from him and sat down on the bench. I sat there a quarter of an hour; I sat there half an hour—the silence of the tomb reigned in the hut. In the corner behind the table under the holy images crouched a little girl of five eating a piece of bread. Her mother shook her finger at her every now and then. In the outer room there was coming and going noise and talk: the brother's wife was chopping cabbage. "Hey, Aksinya," said the injured man at last. "What?" "Some kvass." Aksinya gave him some kvass. Silence again. I asked in a whisper, "Have they given him the sacrament?" "Yes." So, then, everything was in order: he

was waiting for death, that was all. I could not bear it, and went away.

Again, I recall how I went one day to the hospital in the village of Krasnogorye to see the feldsher Kapiton, a friend of mine, and an enthusiastic hunter.

This hospital was housed in what had once been the lodge of the manor house; the lady of the manor had founded it herself; in other words, she ordered a blue board to be nailed up above the door with an inscription in white letters "Krasnogorye Hospital", and had herself handed to Kapiton a lovely album to record the names of the patients in. On the first page of this album one of the toadying parasites of this Lady Bountiful had inscribed the following lines:

*Dans ces beaux lieux, où règne l'allégresse,
Ce temple fut ouvert par le Beauté;
De vos seigneurs admirez la tendresse,
Bons habitants de Krasnogoriè!*

while another gentleman had written below:

Et moi aussi j'aime la nature!

JEAN KOPYLIATNIKOFF.

The feldsher bought six beds at his own expense, and had set to work to heal God's people. Besides him, the staff consisted of two persons: an engraver, Pavel, liable to attacks of insanity, and a one-armed peasant woman, Melikitrisa, who performed the duties of cook. Both of them mixed the medicines and dried and infused herbs; they, too, controlled the patients when they were delirious. The insane engraver was sullen in appearance and sparing of words; at night he would sing a song about "lovely Venus", and would besiege every one he met with a request for permission to marry a girl called Malanya, who had long been dead. The one-armed peasant woman used to beat him and set him to look after the turkeys.

Well, so I was at Kapiton's. We had begun talking over our last day's shooting, when suddenly a cart drove into the yard, drawn by an exceptionally stout grey horse, such as are only found belonging to millers. In the cart sat a thick-set peasant, in a new overcoat, with a beard streaked with grey.

"Hullo, Vassily Dmitrich," Kapiton shouted from the window, "please come in . . . The miller of Libovshino," he whispered to me.

The peasant climbed groaning out of the cart, came into the feldsher's room, looked for the holy images and crossed himself, bowing to them.

"Well, Vassily Dmitrich, any news? . . . But you must be ill; you don't look well."

"Yes, Kapiton Timofeich, there's something wrong."

"What's wrong with you?"

"Well, it was like this, Kapiton Timofeich. Not long ago I bought some millstones in town, so I took them home, and as I started lifting them out of the cart, I strained myself, or something; I'd a sort of wrick in the innards, as though something had snapped, and ever since I've been out of sorts. Today I feel worse than ever."

"Hm," commented Kapiton, and he took a pinch of snuff, "that's a rupture, no doubt. But is it long since this happened?"

"It's ten days now."

"Ten days?" (The feldsher drew a long inward breath and shook his head.) "Let me examine you . . . Well, Vassily Dmitrich," he pronounced at last, "I am sorry for you, heartily sorry, but things aren't right with you at all; you're seriously ill; stay here with me; I will do everything I can for my part, though I can't answer for anything."

"As bad as that?" muttered the astounded peasant.

"Yes, Vassily Dmitrich, it is bad; if you'd come to me a day or two sooner, it would have been nothing much; I could have cured you in a trice; but now inflammation has set in; before we know where we are, there may be mortification."

"But it can't be, Kapiton Timofeich."

"I tell you it is so."

"But how come?"

The feldsher shrugged his shoulders.

"And I must die for a trifle like that?"

"I don't say that . . . only you must stop here."

The peasant pondered, his eyes fixed on the floor, then he glanced up at us, scratched his head, and picked up his cap.

"Where are you off to, Vassily Dmitrich?"

"Where? Why, home to be sure, if it's so bad. I must make arrangements, if it's like that."

"But you'll do yourself harm, Vassily Dmitrich; you will, really; I'm surprised how you managed to get here; you must stay."

"No, brother, Kapiton Timofeich, if I must die, I'll die at home; why die here—the Lord knows what will happen at home if I do."

"No one can tell yet, Vassily Dmitrich, how it will end. Of course, there is danger, considerable danger; there's no disputing that . . . but for that reason you ought to stay here."

The peasant shook his head. "No, Kapiton Timofeich, I won't stay . . . but perhaps you will prescribe me a medicine."

"Medicine alone will be no good."

"I won't stay, I tell you."

"Well, as you like. Mind you don't blame me for it afterwards."

The feldsher tore a page out of the album, and, writing out a prescription, gave him some advice as to what he could do besides. The peasant took the sheet of paper, gave Kapiton half a ruble, went out of the room, and took his seat in the cart. "Well, good-bye, Kapiton Timofeich, don't hold my faults against me, and remember my orphans, if anything . . ."

"Oh, do stay, Vassily!"

The peasant simply shook his head, struck the horse with the reins, and drove out of the yard. I went out and looked after him. The road was muddy and full of holes; the miller drove cautiously, without hurry, guiding his horse skilfully, and nodding to the acquaintances he met. Three days later he was dead.

The Russians, in general, meet death in a remarkable way. Many of the dead come back to my mind now, I recall you, my old friend, Avenir Sorokoumov, the noblest, the best of men! I see once again your sickly, consumptive face, your lank brown tresses, your gentle smile, your ecstatic glance, your long limbs; I can hear your weak, gentle voice. You had left the university without finishing the course and lived at a Russian landlord's called Gur Krupyanikov, teaching his children, Fofa and Zozya, Russian grammar, geography, and history, patiently bearing the ponderous jokes of the said Gur, the coarse familiarities of the butler, the vulgar pranks of the spiteful urchins; with a bitter smile, but without repining, you complied with the caprices of their bored and exacting mother; but to make up for it all, what bliss, what peace was yours in the evening, after supper, when, free at last of all duties, you sat at the window pensively smoking a pipe, or greedily turned the pages of a greasy and mutilated book of some solid magazine, brought you from the town by the land-surveyor—another poor, homeless wretch like yourself! How de-

lighted you were then with any sort of poem or novel; how readily the tears started into your eyes; with what pleasure you laughed; what genuine love for others, what generous sympathy for everything good and noble filled your pure child-like soul! One must tell the truth: you were not distinguished by excessive sharpness of wit; Nature had endowed you with neither memory nor industry; at the university you were regarded as one of the least promising students; at lectures you slumbered, at examinations you preserved a solemn silence; but who was beaming with delight and breathless with excitement at a friend's success, a friend's triumph? Avenir! Who had a blind faith in the lofty destiny of his friends? Who extolled them with pride? Who championed them with angry vehemence? Who was innocent of envy and vanity? Who was ready for the most disinterested self-sacrifice? Who eagerly gave way to men who were not worthy to untie his latchet? . . . That was you, all you, our good Avenir! I remember how broken-heartedly you parted from your comrades, when you were going away to be a tutor in the country; you were haunted by a presentiment of evil.

And, indeed, your lot was a sad one in the country; you had no one there to listen to with veneration, no one to admire, no one to love . . . The neighbours—rude sons of the steppes, and polished gentlemen alike—treated you as a tutor; some were rude to you, others ignored you. Besides, you were not prepossessing in person; you were shy, given to blushing, getting hot and stammering . . . Even your health was no better for the country air; you wasted like a candle, poor fellow! It is true your room looked out in the orchard; cherries, apple-trees, and limes strewed their delicate blossoms on your table, your inkstand, your books; on the wall hung a blue silk watch-pocket, a parting present from a kind-hearted, sentimental German governess with flaxen curls and blue eyes; and sometimes an old friend from Moscow would come out to you and throw you into ecstasies with new poetry, often even with his own. But, oh, the loneliness, the insufferable slavery of a tutor's lot! The impossibility of escape, the endless autumns and winters, the ever-advancing disease! . . . Poor, poor Avenir!

I paid Sorokoumov a visit not long before his death. He was then hardly able to walk. The landlord, Gur Krupyanikov, had not turned him out of the house, but had stopped paying him a salary and had taken another tutor for Zozya . . . Fofa had been sent to a school of cadets. Avenir was sitting near the window in an old easy-chair. It

was exquisite weather. The clear autumn sky was a bright blue above the dark-brown line of bare limes; here and there a few last leaves of vivid gold rustled and whispered on their branches. The earth had been bound by night-frost, and was now thawing and coming out in sweat in the sun, whose ruddy rays fell aslant across the pale grass; there was a faint crisp resonance in the air; the voices of the labourers in the orchard reached us clearly and distinctly. Avenir wore a threadbare Bokhara dressing-gown; a green neckerchief threw a deathly hue over his terribly sunken face. He was greatly delighted to see me, held out his hand and began talking and coughing at once. I made him be quiet, and sat down by him... On Avenir's knees lay a manuscript book of Koltsov's poems, carefully copied out; he patted it with a smile, "That's a poet," he stammered, repressing his cough with an effort; and he fell to declaiming in a voice scarcely audible:

*Can the eagle's wings
Be chained and fettered?
Can the pathways of heaven
Be closed against him?*

I stopped him: the doctor had forbidden him to talk. I knew what would please him. Sorokoumov never, as they say, "kept up" with the science of the day; but he was always anxious to know what discoveries the leading intellects had made. Sometimes he would get an old friend into a corner and begin questioning him; he would listen and wonder, take every word on trust, and repeat it all afterwards as Gospel truth. He took a special interest in German philosophy. I began discoursing to him about Hegel (this all happened long ago, as you may gather). Avenir nodded his head approvingly, raised his eyebrows, smiled, and whispered, "I see! I see! Ah, that's splendid! Splendid..." The childish inquisitiveness of this poor, dying, homeless outcast moved me, I confess, to tears. It must be noted that Avenir, unlike the general run of consumptives, did not deceive himself in the least in regard to his condition. But what of that?—he did not sigh, nor grieve; he did not even once refer to his illness...

Rallying his strength, he began talking of Moscow, of old friends, of Pushkin, of the drama, of Russian literature; he recalled our little suppers, the heated debates of our circle; with regret he uttered the names of two or three friends who were dead...

"Do you remember Dasha?" he went on. "Ah, there was a heart of pure gold! What a heart! And how she loved me! . . . What has become of her now? Wasted and pined away, poor dear, I dare say!"

I had not the courage to disillusion the sick man; and, indeed, why should he know that his Dasha was now broader than she was long, and that she was living under the protection of some merchants, the brothers Kondachkov, that she used powder and paint, and was for ever nagging and scolding?

But can't we, I thought, looking at his wasted face, get him away from here? Perhaps there may still be a chance of curing him. But Avenir cut short my suggestion.

"No, brother, thanks," he said, "it makes no difference where one dies. I shan't live till the winter, you see. Why give trouble for nothing? I'm used to this house. It's true the people . . ."

"They're unkind, eh?" I put in.

"No, not unkind, but unfeeling. However, I can't complain of them. There are neighbours: there's a Mr. Kasatkin's daughter, a cultivated, kind, charming girl . . . not proud . . ."

Sorokoumov began coughing again.

"I shouldn't mind anything," he went on, after taking breath, "if they'd only let me smoke my pipe . . . But I'll have my pipe, if I die for it!" he added, with a sly wink. "Thank God, I have had life enough! I have known so many fine people."

"But you should, at least, write to your relations," I interrupted.

"Why write to them? They can't be any help; when I die they'll hear of it. But, why talk about it . . . I'd rather you'd tell me what you saw abroad."

I began to tell him my experiences. He seemed positively to exult in my story. Towards evening I left, and ten days later I received the following letter from Mr. Krupyanikov:

"I have the honour to inform you, my dear sir, that your friend, the student living in my house, Mr. Avenir Sorokoumov, died at two o'clock in the afternoon three days ago, and was buried today, at my expense, in the parish church. He asked me to forward you the books and manuscripts enclosed herewith. He was found to have twenty-two rubles and fifty kopecks, which, with the rest of his belongings, will be sent to his relatives. Your friend died fully conscious, and, I may say, with so little sensibility that he showed no signs of regret

even when the whole family of us took a last farewell of him. My wife, Kleopatra Alexandrovna, sends you her regards. The death of your friend has, of course, affected her nerves; as regards myself, I am, thank God, in good health, and have the honour to remain your humble servant.

"G. Krupyanikov."

Many more examples occur to me, but one cannot relate everything. I will confine myself to one.

I was present at an old country lady's death; the priest had begun reading the prayers for the dying over her, but, suddenly noticing that the patient seemed to be actually dying, he made haste to give her the cross to kiss. The lady turned her head away with displeasure. "You're in too great a hurry, father," she said in a voice almost inarticulate; "there is time yet." She kissed the cross, put her hand under the pillow and expired. Under the pillow was a silver ruble; she had meant to pay the priest for the service at her own death....

Yes, the Russians die in a remarkable way.

THE SINGERS

The small village of Kolotovka once belonged to a lady known in the neighbourhood by the nickname of Hellcat, in allusion to her lively temper (her real name is lost in oblivion), but has of late years been the property of a German from St. Petersburg. The village lies on the slope of a barren hill, which is cut in half from top to bottom by a tremendous ravine. It is a yawning chasm, with shelving sides hollowed out by the action of wind and water, and it winds along the very centre of the village street, separating the two sides of the unlucky hamlet far more than a river would do, for a river could, at least, be spanned by a bridge. A few gaunt willows creep timorously down its sandy sides; at the very bottom, which is dry and yellow as copper, lie huge slabs of argillaceous rock. A cheerless position, there's no denying it, yet all the surrounding inhabitants know the toad to Kolotovka well; they go there often and willingly.

At the very summit of the ravine, a few paces from the point where it starts as a narrow fissure in the earth, there stands a small square hut. It stands alone, apart from all the others. It is thatched, and has a chimney; one window keeps watch like a sharp eye over the ravine, and on winter evenings when it is lighted from within, it is seen far away in the dim frosty fog, and its twinkling light is a guiding star to many a peasant on his road. A blue board is nailed up above the door; this hut is a tavern, called the "Welcome Shelter". Spirits are sold here probably no cheaper than the usual price, but it is frequented better than any other establishment of the same sort in the neighbourhood. The explanation of this is to be found in the tavern-keeper, Nikolai Ivanich.

Nikolai Ivanich—once a slender, curly-headed and rosy-cheeked young fellow, now an excessively stout, grizzled man with a fat face,

sly and good-natured little eyes, and a shiny forehead, with wrinkles like lines drawn all over it—has lived for more than twenty years in Kolotovka. Nikolai Ivanich is a shrewd, astute fellow, like the majority of tavern-keepers. Though he makes no conspicuous effort to please or to talk to people, he has the art of attracting and keeping customers, who find it particularly pleasant to sit at his bar under the placid and genial, though alert eye of the phlegmatic host. He has a great deal of common sense; he thoroughly understands the landowner's conditions of life, the peasant's and the townsman's. He could give sensible advice on difficult points, but, a cautious man and an egoist that he is, prefers to stand aloof, and at most—and that only in the case of his favourite customers—by remote hints, dropped, as it were, unwittingly may prompt a correct decision. He is an authority on everything that is of interest or importance to a Russian: on horses and cattle, on timber, bricks, and crockery, on woollen stuffs and on leather, on songs and dances. When he has no customers, he usually sits like a sack on the ground before the door of his hut, his thin legs tucked under him, exchanging a friendly greeting with every passer-by. He has seen a great deal in his time; many a score of petty landowners, who used to come to him for "clarified" spirits, he has seen pass away; he knows everything that occurs for a hundred miles round, and never gossips, never gives a sign of knowing even those things that are unsuspected by the most keensighted police officer. He keeps his own counsel, chortles, and wipes his glasses. His neighbours respect him; the civilian general Scherepetenko, the landlord highest in rank in the uyezd, gives him a condescending nod whenever he drives past his little house. Nikolai Ivanich is a man of influence; he made a notorious horse-stealer return a horse he had taken from the stable of one of his friends; he brought the peasants of a neighbouring village to their senses when they refused to accept a new steward, and so on. It must not be imagined, though, that he does this from love of justice or from devotion to his neighbour—no! He simply tries to prevent anything that might, in one way or another interfere with his ease and comfort. Nikolai Ivanich is married, and has children. His wife, a smart, sharp-nosed and keen-eyed townswoman, has grown somewhat stout of late years, like her husband. He relies on her in everything, and she keeps the key of the cash-box. Drunken brawlers are afraid of her; she does not like them; they bring little profit and make a great deal of noise; those who are taciturn and surly in their cups are more

to her taste. Nikolai Ivanich's children are still small; the first all died, but those that are left take after their parents; it is a pleasure to look at their intelligent, healthy faces.

It was an insufferably hot day in July when, slowly dragging my feet along, I went up alongside the Kolotovka ravine with my dog towards the Welcome Shelter. The sun blazed fiercely in the sky, baking the parched earth relentlessly; the air was thick with stifling dust. Glossy crows and rooks with gaping beaks looked plaintively at the passers-by, as though asking for sympathy; only the sparrows did not droop, but, pluming their feathers, twittered more vigorously than ever as they quarrelled on the fences, or flew up all together from the dusty road and hovered in grey clouds over the green hemp-plots. I was tormented by thirst. There was no water near: in Kolotovka, as in many other villages of the steppes, the peasants, having no spring or well, drink a sort of thin mud out of the pond. No one could call that repulsive beverage water. I wanted to ask for a glass of beer or kvass at Nikolai Ivanich's.

It must be confessed that at no time of the year does Kolotovka present a very cheering spectacle; but it has a particularly depressing effect when the relentless rays of a dazzling July sun pour down full upon the brown, half-bared roofs of the huts and the deep ravine, and the parched, dusty common over which the thin, long-legged hens are straying hopelessly, and the remains of the old manor house, now a hollow, grey framework of aspen-wood, with holes instead of windows, overgrown with nettles, wormwood, and rank grass, and the pond black, as though charred, and covered with goose feathers, with its edge of half-dried mud, and its broken-down dyke, near which, on the finely trodden, ash-like earth, sheep, breathless and gasping with the heat, huddle dejectedly together, their heads drooping with weary patience, as though waiting for this insufferable heat to pass at last. With weary steps I drew near Nikolai Ivanich's dwelling, arousing in the village children the usual wonder manifested in a concentrated, meaningless stare, and in the dogs an indignation expressed in such hoarse and furious barking that it seemed as if it were tearing their very entrails, and left them breathless and choking, when suddenly in the tavern doorway there appeared a tall peasant without a cap, in a frieze coat, girt below his waist with a blue belt. He looked like a house-serf; thick grey hair stood up in disorder above his withered and wrinkled face. He was calling to someone hurriedly, waving his arms, which obviously were not quite

under his control. It could be seen that he had had a few.

"Come, come along!" he stammered, raising his shaggy eyebrows with an effort. "Come, Blinkard, come along! Ah, brother, how you creep along, 'pon my word! It's too bad, brother. They're waiting for you within, and here you crawl along. Come."

"Well, I'm coming, I'm coming!" called a jarring voice, and from behind a hut a short, fat, lame man came into view. He wore a rather tidy cloth coat, pulled half on, and a high pointed cap right over his brows, which gave his round plump face a sly and comic expression. His little yellow eyes moved restlessly about, his thin lips wore a continual forced smile, while his sharp, long nose stuck out saucily in front like a rudder. "I'm coming, my dear fellow." He said, hobbling towards the tavern. "What are you calling me for? Who's waiting for me?"

"What am I calling you for?" repeated the man in the frieze coat reproachfully. "You're a queer fish, Blinkard: we call you to come to the tavern, and you ask what for? Here are honest folks all waiting for you: Yakov the Turk, and the Wild Master, and the contractor from Zhizdra. Yakov's got a bet on with the contractor: the stake's a pot of beer—for the one that does best, sings best, I mean... do you see?"

"Is Yakov going to sing?" said the man addressed as Blinkard with lively interest. "You're not making it up, are you, Giddyhead?"

"I'm not making it up," answered Giddyhead with dignity, "it's you talk stupid. I should think he would sing since he's got a bet on it, you precious innocent, you rogue, Blinkard!"

"Well, come in, simpleton!" retorted the Blinkard.

"Then give us a kiss at least, lovey," stammered Giddyhead, opening wide his arms.

"Go on, you great softy!" responded the Blinkard contemptuously, giving him a poke with his elbow, and both, stooping, entered the low doorway.

The conversation I had overheard roused my curiosity exceedingly. More than once rumours had reached me of Yakov the Turk as the best singer in the vicinity, and here was an opportunity all at once of hearing him in competition with another master of the art. I quickened my steps and went into the tavern.

Few of my readers have probably had an opportunity of getting a good view of a village tavern, but we hunters go everywhere. They are constructed on an exceedingly simple plan. They usually consist

of a dark outer shed, and an inner room divided in two by a partition, behind which none of the customers have a right to go. In this partition there is a wide opening cut above a broad oak table. At this table or bar the spirits are served. Sealed up bottles of various sizes stand on the shelves, right opposite the opening. In the front part of the room, given over to customers, there are benches, two or three empty barrels, and a corner table. Village taverns are for the most part rather dark, and you hardly ever see on their log walls any of the glaring cheap prints which few huts are without.

When I went into the Welcome Shelter, a fairly large party were already assembled there.

In his usual place behind the bar, almost filling up the entire opening in the partition, stood Nikolai Ivanich in a striped print shirt; with a lazy smile on his full face, he poured out with his plump white hand two glasses of spirits for Blinkard and Giddyhead who had just come in; behind him, in a corner near the window, could be seen his sharp-eyed wife. In the middle of the room was standing Yakov the Turk, a thin, graceful fellow of three-and-twenty, dressed in a long skirted coat of blue nankeen. He looked a smart factory-hand, and could not, to judge by his appearance, boast of very good health. His hollow cheeks, his large, restless grey eyes, his straight nose, with its delicate mobile nostrils, his pale-brown curls brushed back over the sloping white brow, his full but beautiful, expressive lips, and his whole face betrayed a passionate and sensitive nature. He was in a state of great excitement; he blinked, his breathing was hurried, his hands shook, as though in a fever, and he was really in a fever—that sudden fever of excitement which is so well known to all who have to speak and sing before an audience. Near him stood a man of about forty, with broad shoulders and broad jaws, with a low forehead, narrow Tatar eyes, a short flat nose, a square chin, and shining black hair, coarse as bristles. The expression of his face—a swarthy face, with a sort of leaden hue in it—and especially of his pale lips, might almost have been called savage, if it had not been so calm and pensive. He hardly stirred a muscle; he only looked slowly about him like a bull from under the yoke. He was dressed in a sort of surtout, not over new, with smooth brass buttons; an old black silk kerchief was twisted round his immense neck. He was nicknamed the Wild Man. Right opposite him, on a bench under the holy images, was ~~standing~~ ^{sitting} Yakov's rival, the contractor from Zhizdra; he was a short, stoutly built man of about thirty, pock-marked and curly-headed,

with a blunt, turn-up nose, lively brown eyes, and a scanty beard. He looked keenly about him, and, sitting with his hands under him, he kept carelessly swinging his legs and tapping with his feet, which were encased in stylish top-boots with a coloured edging. He wore a new coat of fine grey cloth, with a plush collar, in sharp contrast with the crimson shirt below, buttoned close round his neck. In the opposite corner, to the right of the door, a peasant sat at the table in a narrow, shabby smock, with a huge rent on the shoulder. The sunlight fell in narrow, yellowish streaks through the dusty panes of the two small windows, but it seemed as if it struggled in vain with the habitual darkness of the room; all the objects in it were dimly, as it were, patchily lighted up. On the other hand, it was almost cool in the room, and the sense of stifling heat dropped off me like a weary load directly I crossed the threshold.

My entrance, I could see, was at first somewhat disconcerting to Nikolai Ivanich's customers; but observing that he greeted me as a friend, they were reassured, and took no more notice of me. I asked for some beer and sat down in the corner, near the peasant in the ragged smock.

"Well, well," piped the Giddyhead, having drained a glass of spirits at one gulp and accompanying his exclamation with the strange gesticulations, without which he seemed unable to utter a single word, "what are we waiting for? If we're going to begin, then begin. Hey, Yakov?"

"Begin, begin," chimed in Nikolai Ivanich approvingly.

"Let's begin, by all means," observed the contractor coolly, with a self-confident smile, "I'm ready."

"And I'm ready," Yakov pronounced in a voice thick with excitement.

"Well, begin, lads," whined the Blinkard. But, in spite of the unanimously expressed desire, neither began; the contractor did not even get up from the bench—they all seemed to be waiting for something.

"Begin!" said the Wild Master sharply and sullenly.

Yakov started. The contractor pulled down his girdle and cleared his throat.

"But who's to begin?" he inquired in a slightly changed voice of the Wild Master, who still stood motionless in the middle of the room, his stalwart legs wide apart and his powerful arms thrust up to the elbow into his breeches pockets.

"You, you, contractor," stammered the Giddyhead, "you begin, brother."

The Wild Master looked at him from under his brows. The Giddyhead gave a faint squeak, looked away at the ceiling in confusion, twitched his shoulders, and said no more.

"Cast lots," the Wild Master pronounced emphatically, "and the pot on the table."

Nikolai Ivanich bent down, and with a grunt picked up the pot of beer from the floor and set it on the table.

The Wild Master glanced at Yakov and said, "Come!"

Yakov fumbled in his pockets, took out a kopeck, and marked it with his teeth. The contractor pulled from under the skirts of his long coat a new leather purse, deliberately untied the string, and shaking out a quantity of small change into his hand, picked out a new kopeck. The Giddyhead held out his dirty cap, with its broken peak hanging loose; Yakov dropped his kopeck in, and the contractor his.

"You must pick out one," said the Wild Master, turning to the Blinkard.

The Blinkard smiled complacently, took the cap in both hands, and began shaking it.

For an instant a profound silence reigned; the kopecks clinked faintly, jingling against each other. I looked round attentively; every face wore an expression of intense expectation; the Wild Master himself looked tense; even my neighbour, the peasant in the tattered smock, craned his neck inquisitively. The Blinkard put his hand into the cap and took out the contractor's kopeck; everyone drew a long breath. Yakov flushed, and the contractor passed his hand over his hair.

"There, I said you'd begin," cried the Giddyhead, "didn't I say so?"

"There, there, don't cluck," remarked the Wild Master contemptuously. "Begin," he went on, with a nod to the contractor.

"What song shall I sing?" asked the contractor, beginning to be nervous.

"Any one you choose," answered the Blinkard, "whatever you like."

"Any one you choose, to be sure," Nikolai Ivanich chimed in, slowly folding his hands on his breast, "you're quite at liberty about that. Sing what you like; only sing well; and we'll give a fair decision afterwards."

"A fair decision, of course," put in the Giddyhead, licking the edge of his empty glass.

"Let me clear my throat a bit, mates," said the contractor, fingering the collar of his coat.

"Come, come, no dilly-dallying—begin!" protested the Wild Master, and he looked down.

The contractor thought a minute, shook his head, and stepped forward. Yakov's eyes were riveted upon him.

But before I enter upon a description of the contest itself, I think it will not be amiss to say a few words about each of the personages in my story. The lives of some of them were known to me already when I met them in the Welcome Shelter; I collected some facts about the others later on.

Let us begin with the Giddyhead. This man's real name was Evgraf Ivanov; but no one in the whole neighbourhood knew him as anything but the Giddyhead, and he himself referred to himself by that nickname, so well did it fit him. Indeed, nothing could have been more appropriate to his insignificant, ever-restless features; he was a dissipated, unmarried house-serf, whose own masters had long ago given him up, and who, without any employment, without earning a kopeck, managed to get drunk every day at other people's expense. He had a great number of acquaintances who treated him to drinks of spirits and tea without knowing why; for, far from being entertaining in company, he bored everyone with his meaningless chatter, his insufferable familiarity, his spasmodic gestures and incessant, unnatural laugh. He could neither sing nor dance; he had never said a clever, or even a sensible word in his life; he bleathered giddily, making up all sorts of nonsense—in other words, he was a regular Giddyhead! And yet not a single drinking party for thirty versts around took place without his lank figure turning up among the guests; they were used to him by now, and put up with his presence as an unavoidable evil. They all, it is true, treated him with contempt; but the Wild Master was the only one who knew how to keep his foolish sallies in check.

The Blinkard was not in the least like the Giddyhead. His nickname, too, suited him, though he was no more given to blinking than other people; it is a well-known fact that the Russian peasants have a talent for finding fitting nicknames. In spite of my endeavours to get more detailed information about this man's past, many passages in his life have remained obscure to me, and probably to many other people;

episodes buried, as the bookmen say, in the darkness of oblivion. I could only find out that he was once a coachman in the service of an old childless lady; that he had run away with three horses he was in charge of; had been lost for a whole year, and, no doubt convinced by experience of the disadvantages and hardships of a wandering life, he had gone back, a cripple, and flung himself at his mistress's feet. He succeeded in expiating his offence by exemplary conduct for several years and, gradually getting higher in her favour, at last gained her complete confidence, was made a bailiff, and on his mistress's death, turned out—in what way was never known—to have received his freedom. He got admitted into the estate of townsmen; rented patches of market-garden from the neighbours; grew rich, and now was living in ease and comfort. He was a man of experience, who knew on which side his bread was buttered; he was actuated by prudence more than by either good or ill nature; had knocked about, understood men, and knew how to turn them to his own advantage. He was cautious, and at the same time enterprising, like a fox; though he was as fond of gossip as an old woman, he never let out a whisper about his own affairs, while he made everyone else talk freely of theirs. He did not affect to be a simpleton, though, as so many crafty men do; indeed, it would have been difficult for him to take anyone in, in that way; I have never seen a sharper, keener pair of eyes than his tiny cunning "peepers", as they call them in Orel. They were never simply looking; they were always looking out for things and through one. The Blinkard would sometimes ponder for weeks over some apparently simple undertaking, and again he would suddenly decide on a desperately bold enterprise, which one would fancy would bring him to ruin. But it would be sure to turn out all right; everything would go smoothly. He was lucky, and believed in his own luck, and believed in omens. He was exceedingly superstitious in general. He was not liked, because he took nobody's affairs to heart, but he was respected. His whole family consisted of one little son, whom he idolised, and who, brought up by such a father, is likely to get on in the world. "Little Blinkard is his father over again," the old men say of him already in undertones, as they sit on by their houses gossiping on summer evenings, and every one knows what that means; there is no need to say more.

As to Yakov the Turk and the contractor, there is no need to say much about them. Yakov, called the Turk because he actually was descended from a Turkish woman, taken prisoner in the war, was

by nature an artist in every sense of the word, and by trade, a ladler in a paper mill belonging to a merchant. As for the contractor, his career, I must own, I know nothing of; he struck me as being a smart townsman of the tradesman class. But the Wild Master calls for a more detailed account.

The first impression the sight of this man produced on you was a sense of coarse, heavy, irresistible power. He was clumsily built, "all in one piece", as they say among us, but there was an air of indestructible vigour about him, and—strange to say—his bear-like figure was not without a certain grace of its own, proceeding, perhaps, from his absolutely placid confidence in his own strength. It was hard to decide at first to what class this Hercules belonged: he did not look like a house-serf, nor a townsman, nor an impoverished clerk out of work, nor a small ruined landlord, a lover of hounds and brawls; he was, in fact, quite individual. No one knew where he came from or what brought him into our uyezd; it was said that he came of freeholder stock, and had once been in the government service somewhere, but nothing positive was known about this; and indeed there was no one from whom one could learn—certainly not from him; he was the most silent and morose of men. Nor could anyone tell for certain what he lived on; he followed no trade, visited no one, associated with scarcely anyone; yet he had money to spend; little enough, it is true, still he had some. In his behaviour he was not exactly retiring—retiring was not a word that could be applied to him—but unostentatious; he lived as though he noticed no one about him, and cared for no one. The Wild Master (that was the nickname they had given him; his real name was Perevlesov) enjoyed an immense influence in the whole district; he was obeyed with eager promptitude, though he had no kind of right to give orders to anyone, and did not himself evince the slightest claim to authority over the people with whom he came into casual contact. He spoke—they obeyed: strength always tells. He scarcely drank at all, had nothing to do with women, and was passionately fond of singing. There was much that was mysterious about this man; it seemed as though vast forces sullenly reposed within him, knowing, as it were, that once roused, once bursting free, they were bound to crush him and everything they came in contact with; and I am greatly mistaken if, in this man's life, there had not been some such outbreak; if it was not owing to this lesson of experience, to a narrow escape from ruin, that he now kept himself so tightly in hand. What especially struck

me in him was the combination of a sort of inborn natural ferocity with an equally high-mindedness—a combination I have never met in any other man.

And so the contractor stepped forward, and, half shutting his eyes, began singing in high falsetto. He had a fairly sweet and pleasant voice, though a bit hoarse; he played with his voice, whirling it like a top, twisting and turning it in roulades and trills up and down the scale, continually returning to the highest notes, which he held and prolonged with special care. Then he would break off, and again suddenly take up the first tune with a sort of go-ahead daring. His modulations were at times rather bold, at times rather comical; they would have given a connoisseur great satisfaction, and have made a German furiously indignant. He was a Russian *tenore di grazia*, *ténor léger*. He sang a lively dance-song, the words of which, all that I could catch through the endless maze of embellishments, ejaculations and repetitions, were as follows:

*A tiny patch of land, young lass,
I'll plough for thee,
And tiny crimson flowers, young lass,
I'll sow for thee.*

He sang; all listened to him with great attention. He seemed to feel that he had to do with really knowledgeable people, and therefore was exerting himself to do his best. And they really are musical in our part of the country; the village of Sergievskoye on the Orel highroad is deservedly noted throughout Russia for its harmonious chorus-singing. The contractor sang for a long while without evoking much enthusiasm in his audience; he lacked the support of a chorus; but at last, after one particularly bold flourish, which set even the Wild Master smiling, the Giddyhead could not refrain from a shout of delight. Everyone was roused. The Giddyhead and the Blinkard began joining in an undertone and exclaiming, "Bravely done . . . Come on, rogue . . . Sing it out, serpent! Hold it! Do it again, you dog, you, confound your soul!" and so on. Nikolai Ivanich behind the bar was nodding his head from side to side approvingly. The Giddyhead was now swinging his legs, tapping with his feet and twitching his shoulder, while Yakov's eyes fairly glowed like coal, and he trembled all over, and smiled nervously. The Wild Master alone did not change countenance, and stood motionless as before; but his eyes fastened

on the contractor had somewhat softened, though the expression of his lips was still scornful. Emboldened by the signs of general approbation, the contractor went off in a whirl of flourishes, and began to execute such trills, to dash off such shakes of his tongue, and to make such furious play with his throat, that when at last, pale, exhausted, and bathed in hot perspiration, he uttered the last dying note, his whole body flung back, a general united cheer greeted him in a violent outburst. The Giddyhead threw himself on his neck and began strangling him in his long, bony arms; a flush came out on Nikolai Ivanich's oily face, and he seemed to have grown younger; Yakov shouted like mad, "Capital, capital!" Even my neighbour, the peasant in the torn smock, could not restrain himself, and with a blow of his fist on the table, he cried, "Ha! Well done, damn my soul, ha! Well done!" And he spat with an air of decision.

"Well, brother, you've given us a treat!" bawled the Giddyhead, not releasing the exhausted contractor from his embraces. "You've given us a treat, you have! You've won, brother, you've won! I congratulate you—the pot's yours! Yakov's miles behind you . . . I tell you: miles . . . take my word for it." (And again he hugged the contractor to his breast.)

"There, let him alone, let him alone; there's no being rid of you . . ." said the Blinkard with vexation; "let him sit down on the bench; he's tired, see. You're a ninny, brother, a perfect ninny! What are you pestering him for?"

"Well, then, let him sit down, and I'll drink to his health," said the Giddyhead, and he went up to the bar. "At your expense, brother," he added, addressing the contractor.

The latter nodded, sat down on the bench, pulled a handkerchief out of his cap, and began wiping his face, while the Giddyhead, with greedy haste, emptied his glass, and, with a grunt, assumed, after the manner of confirmed drinkers, an expression of careworn melancholy.

"You sing beautifully, brother, beautifully," Nikolai Ivanich observed kindly. "And now it's your turn, Yakov; mind, now, don't be afraid. We shall see who'll win; we shall see . . . The contractor sings well, though; 'pon my soul, he does."

"Very well," observed Nikolai Ivanich's wife, and she looked with a smile at Yakov.

"Well, ha!" repeated my neighbour in an undertone.

"Aha, a wild man of the woods!" the Giddyhead vociferated

suddenly, and running up to the peasant with the rent on his shoulder, he pointed at him with his finger and pranced about guffawing rattlingly. "Ha! ha! Get along! Wild man of the woods! A dolt from the Woodlands! What d'you want here, dolt?" he bawled shrieking with laughter.

The poor peasant was abashed, and was on the point of getting up and making off as fast as he could, when suddenly the Wild Master's brass voice was heard:

"Is there no subduing the insufferable brute?" he articulated, grinding his teeth.

"I wasn't doing nothing," muttered the Giddyhead. "I didn't... I only..."

"There, all right, shut up!" retorted the Wild Master. "Yakov, begin!"

Yakov put his hand on his throat:

"Well, really, brothers... you know... Hm, I don't know, on my word, there's something..."

"Come, that's enough; don't be timid. For shame!... Don't prevaricate, now! Sing the best you can, by God's gift."

And the Wild Master looked down expectant.

Yakov was silent for a minute; he glanced round and covered his face with his hand. All had their eyes fastened upon him, especially the contractor, on whose face a faint, involuntary uneasiness could be seen through his habitual expression of self-confidence and the triumph of his success. He leant back against the wall, and again put both hands under him, but did not swing his legs as before. When at last Yakov uncovered his face, it was pale as a dead man's; his eyes gleamed faintly under their drooping lashes. He gave a deep sigh and began to sing... The first sound of his voice was faint and uneven, and seemed not to come from his chest, but to be wafted from somewhere afar off, as though it had floated by chance into the room. A strange effect was produced on all of us by this trembling, vibrant note; we glanced at one another, and Nikolai Ivanich's wife seemed to draw herself up. This first note was followed by another, bolder and prolonged, but still obviously quivering, like a string when, suddenly struck by a stray finger, it throbs in a last, swiftly dying tremble; the second was followed by a third, and, gradually gaining fire and breadth, the strains swelled into a mournful melody. "'Twas not the little path lay across the field," he sang, and sweet and eerie it was in our ears. I have seldom, I must confess, heard a voice like

it; it was slightly hoarse, and as though cracked; there was even something morbid about it at first; but it had genuine depth of passion, and youth, and power, and sweetness, and a fascinating, careless, pathetic melancholy. The soul of Russia, candid and ardent, was sounding and breathing in that voice, and it seemed to go straight to your heart, to go straight to all that was Russian in it. The song swelled and flowed. Yakov was clearly carried away; he was not timid now; he surrendered himself wholly to the rapture of his art; his voice no longer trembled; it quivered, but with the scarce perceptible inward quiver of passion, which pierces like an arrow to the very soul of the listeners; and he steadily gained strength and firmness and breadth. I remember I once saw at sunset on a flat sandy shore, when the tide was low and the sea's roar came weighty and menacing from the distance, a great white sea-gull; it sat motionless, its silky bosom facing the crimson glow of the setting sun, and only now and then opened wide its great wings to greet the well-known sea, to greet the sinking lurid sun: I recalled it, as I listened to Yakov. He sang, utterly forgetful of his rival and all of us, but obviously supported, as a bold swimmer by the waves, by our silent, passionate sympathy. He sang, and in every sound of his voice one seemed to feel something dear and akin to us, something of breadth and space, as though the familiar steppes were unfolding before our eyes and stretching away into endless distance. I felt the tears gathering in my bosom and rising to my eyes; suddenly I was struck by dull, smothered sobs . . . I looked round—the tavern-keeper's wife was weeping, her bosom pressed close to the window-sill. Yakov threw a quick glance at her, and he sang more sweetly, more melodiously than ever; Nikolai Ivanich looked down; the Blinkard turned away; the Giddyhead, overwhelmed, stood, his gaping mouth stupidly open; the humble peasant was sobbing softly in the corner and shaking his head with a plaintive murmur; and over the iron visage of the Wild Master, from under his overhanging brows, there slowly rolled a heavy tear; the contractor raised his clenched fist to his brow, and did not stir. I don't know how the general emotion would have ended, if Yakov had not suddenly come to a full stop on a high, exceptionally shrill note—as though his voice had snapped. No one called out, or even stirred; everyone seemed to be waiting to see whether he was not going to sing more, but he opened his eyes as though wondering at our silence, looked round at all of us with a face of inquiry . . . and saw that the victory was his.

"Yakov," said the Wild Master, laying his hand on his shoulder, and he could say no more.

We all stood, as it were, petrified. The contractor softly rose and went up to Yakov.

"You... it's yours... you've won," he articulated at last with an effort, and rushed out of the room. His rapid, decided action broke the spell, as it were; we all suddenly fell into noisy, delighted talk. The Giddyhead bounded up and down, stammered and brandished his arms like mill-sails; the Blinkard limped up to Yakov and began kissing him; Nikolai Ivanich got up and solemnly announced that he would add a second pot of beer from himself. The Wild Master laughed a sort of kindly laugh, which I should never have expected to see on his face; the humble peasant, as he wiped his eyes, cheeks, nose, and beard on his sleeves, kept repeating in his corner, "Ah, good it was, by God! Blast me for the son of a dog, but it was good!" while Nikolai Ivanich's wife, her face red with weeping, got up quickly and went away. Yakov gloried in his triumph like a child; his whole face was transformed, his eyes especially fairly glowed with happiness. They dragged him to the bar; he beckoned the weeping peasant up to it, and sent the tavern-keeper's little son to fetch the contractor, who was not found, however; and the festivities began. "You'll sing to us again; you're going to sing to us till evening," the Giddyhead declared, flourishing his hands in the air.

I took one more look at Yakov and went out. I did not want to stay—I was afraid of spoiling the impression I had received. But the heat was as insupportable as before. It seemed hanging in a thick, heavy layer low over the earth; over the dark-blue sky tiny bright fires seemed whisking through the finest, almost black dust. Everything was still; and there was something hopeless and oppressive in this profound hush of exhausted nature. I made my way to a hayloft and lay down on the fresh-cut but already almost dry grass. For a long while I could not go to sleep; for a long while Yakov's irresistible voice was ringing in my ears. At last the heat and fatigue won out, and I fell into a dead sleep. When I waked up, everything was in darkness; the grass scattered around smelt strong and was slightly damp; through the slender rafters of the half-open roof pale stars were faintly twinkling. I went out. The glow of sunset had long died away, and its last trace showed in a faint paleness on the horizon; but above the freshness of the night there was still a feeling of heat in the atmosphere, lately baked through by the sun, and the breast

still craved for a draught of cool air. There was no wind, nor were there any clouds; the sky all round was clear, and transparently dark, softly glimmering with innumerable but scarcely visible stars. There were lights twinkling about the village; from the flaring tavern close by rose a confused, discordant din, amid which I fancied I recognised the voice of Yakov. Violent laughter came from there in an outburst at times. I went up to the little window and pressed my face against the pane. I saw a cheerless, though varied and animated scene: all were drunk—all from Yakov upwards. With breast bared, he sat on a bench, singing in a thick voice a bold dance-song as he lazily fingered and strummed on the strings of a guitar. His moist hair hung in tufts over his fearfully pale face. In the middle of the room, the Giddyhead, completely "unscrewed" and without his coat, was hopping about in a dance before the peasant in the grey smock; the peasant, for his part, was with difficulty stamping and scraping with his feet, and grinning meaninglessly through his dishevelled beard; he waved one hand from time to time, as much as to say, "Here goes!" Nothing could be more ludicrous than his face: however much he twitched up his eyebrows, his heavy lids would hardly rise, but seemed lying upon his scarcely visible, dim, and mawkish eyes. He was in that amiable state of a perfectly intoxicated man when every passer-by directly he looks him in the face, is sure to say, "My, brother, aren't you high!" The Blinkard, as red as a lobster, and his nostrils dilated wide, was smirking malignantly in a corner; only Nikolai Ivanich, as befits a good tavern-keeper, preserved his composure unchanged. The room was thronged with many new faces; but the Wild Master I did not see in it.

I turned away with rapid steps and began descending the hill on which Kolotovka lies. At the foot of this hill stretches a wide plain; plunged in the misty waves of the evening fog, it seemed more immense, and was, as it were, merged with the darkening sky. I walked with long strides along the road by the ravine, when all at once from somewhere far away in the plain came a boy's clear voice: "Antropka! Antropka-a-a!..." He shouted in obstinate and tearful desperation, long drawing out the last syllable.

He was silent for a few instants, and started shouting again. His voice rang out clear in the still, lightly slumbering air. Thirty times at least he had called the name Antropka, when suddenly, from the farthest end of the plain, as though from another world, there floated a scarcely audible reply:

"Wha-a-t?"

The boy's voice shouted back at once with gleeful exasperation:

"Come here, de-e-vil!"

"What fo-or?" replied the other, after a long interval.

"Because Dad wants to thra-a-sh you!" the first voice shouted back hurriedly.

The second voice did not call back again, and the boy fell to shouting Antropka once more. His cries, fainter and less and less frequent, still floated up to my ears, when it had grown completely dark, and I had turned the corner of the wood which skirts my village and lies over four versts from Kolotovka...

"Antropka-a-a!" was still audible in the air, filled with the shadows of night.

PYOTR PETROVICH KARATAEV

One autumn, five years ago or so, I chanced, when on the road from Moscow to Tula, to spend almost a whole day at a posting station for want of horses. I was on the way back from a shooting expedition, and had been so incautious as to send my troika on in front of me. The post master, a surly, elderly man, with hair hanging over his brows to his very nose, with little sleepy eyes, answered all my complaints and requests with disconnected grumbling, slammed the door angrily, as though he were cursing his calling in life, and going out on the steps abused the post-boys who were sauntering in a leisurely way through the mud with the weighty wooden yokes on their arms, or sat yawning and scratching themselves on a bench, and paid no special attention to the wrathful exclamations of their superior. I had already sat myself down three times to tea, had several times tried in vain to sleep, and had read all the inscriptions on the walls and windows; I was overpowered by fearful boredom. In chill and helpless despair I was staring at the upturned shafts of my carriage, when suddenly I heard the tinkling of a bell, and a small trap, drawn by three jaded horses, drew up at the steps. The new arrival leaped out of the trap, and shouting "Horses! And look sharp!" went into the room. While he was listening with the strange wonder customary in such cases to the post master's answer that there were no horses, I had time to scan my new companion from top to toe with all the greedy curiosity of a man bored to death. He appeared to be about thirty. Small-pox had left indelible traces on his face, which was dry and yellowish, with an unpleasant coppery tinge; his long blue-black hair fell in ringlets on his collar behind, and was twisted into curls on the temples; his small swollen eyes were quite expressionless; a few hairs sprouted on his upper lip. He was dressed like a dissipated country gentleman, given to frequenting

horse-fairs, in a rather greasy striped Caucasian-style jacket, a faded lilac silk tie, a waistcoat with copper buttons, and grey trousers shaped like huge funnels, from under which the toes of unbrushed boots could just be discerned. He smelt strongly of tobacco and spirits; on his fat, red fingers almost hidden in his sleeves, could be seen silver and Tula rings. Such figures are met in Russia not by dozens, but by hundreds, an acquaintance with them is not, to tell the truth, productive of any particular pleasure; but in spite of the prejudice with which I looked at the newcomer, I could not fail to notice the recklessly good-natured and passionate expression of his face.

"This gentleman's been waiting more than an hour here, too," observed the post master, indicating me.

More than an hour! The rascal was making fun of me.

"But perhaps he doesn't need them as I do," answered the newcomer.

"I know nothing about that," said the post master sulkily.

"Then is it really impossible? Are there positively no horses?"

"Impossible. There's not a single horse."

"Well, tell them to bring me a samovar then. I'll wait a little; there's nothing else to be done."

The newcomer sat down on the bench, flung his cap on the table, and passed his hand over his hair.

"Have you had tea already?" he inquired of me.

"Yes."

"But won't you have a little more for company?"

I consented. The stout red samovar made its appearance for the fourth time on the table. I brought out a bottle of rum. I was not wrong in taking my new acquaintance for a country gentleman of small property. His name was Pyotr Petrovich Karataev.

We got into conversation. In less than half an hour after his arrival, he was telling me his whole life with the most simple-hearted openness.

"I'm on my way to Moscow now," he told me as he sipped his fourth glass. "There's nothing for me to do in the country any more."

"How so?"

"Well, it's come to that. My property's in disorder; I've ruined my property, I must confess; there have been bad years: bad harvests, and all sorts of ill luck, you know... Though, indeed," he added,

looking away dejectedly, "how could I manage an estate!"

"Why's that?"

"But, no," he interrupted me, "do people like me make good managers? You see," he went on, screwing his head on one side and sucking his pipe assiduously, "looking at me, I dare say you may think I'm not very . . . but I must confess, I've had a very middling education; there wasn't the money. I beg your pardon; I'm an open man, and if you come to that . . ."

He did not complete his sentence, but broke off with a wave of his hand. I began to assure him that he was mistaken, that I was highly delighted to meet him and so on, and then observed that I should have thought a very thorough education was not indispensable for the good management of property.

"Agreed," he responded, "I agree with you. But still, a special sort of disposition's essential! There are some skin their peasants alive, and it's all right! But I . . . Allow me to ask, are you from Petersburg or from Moscow?"

"I'm from Petersburg."

He blew a long coil of smoke from his nostrils.

"And I'm going to Moscow to seek a post."

"What department do you mean to enter?"

"I don't know; that's as it happens. I'll own to you, I'm afraid of government service; one's under responsibility at once. I've always lived in the country; I'm used to being my own master, you know . . . but now, there's no help for it . . . it's through poverty! Oh, poverty, how I hate it!"

"But then you will be living in the capital."

"In the capital . . . Well, I don't know what there is that's so pleasant in the capital. We shall see; maybe, it's pleasant, too. Though nothing, I fancy, could be better than the country."

"Then is it really impossible for you to live at your country place?"

He gave a sigh.

"Quite impossible. It's, so to say, not my own now."

"Why, how so?"

"Well, a good fellow there, neighbour, turned up . . . a bill of exchange."

Poor Pyotr Petrovich passed his hand over his face, thought a minute, and shook his head.

"Well? . . . I must own, though," he added after a brief silence, "I

can't blame anybody; it's my own fault. I was fond of cutting a dash, I am fond of cutting a dash, damn my soul!"

"You had a jolly life in the country?" I asked him.

"I had, sir," he responded emphatically, looking me straight in the face, "twelve harriers—harriers, I can tell you, such as you don't very often see." (The last words he uttered in a drawl with great significance.) "A grey hare they'd double upon in no time. After the red fox—they were devils, regular serpents. And I could boast of my greyhounds too. It's all a thing of the past now, I've no reason to lie. I used to go out shooting too. I had a dog called Countess, a wonderful setter, with a first-rate scent—she took everything. Sometimes I'd go to a marsh and call, '*Cherche!*' If she refused, you might go with a dozen dogs, and you'd find nothing. But when she was after anything, it was a sight to see her. And in the house so well bred. If you gave her bread with your left hand and said, 'A Jew's tasted it,' she wouldn't touch it; but give it with your right and say, 'The young lady's had some,' and she'd take it and eat it at once. I had a pup of hers—a capital pup he was, and I meant to bring him with me to Moscow, but a friend talked me into giving it to him, together with a gun; he said, 'In Moscow you'll have other things to think of.' I gave him the pup and the gun; and so, I've left everything there, you know."

"But you might go shooting in Moscow."

"No, what would be the use? I didn't know when to pull myself up, so now I must grin and bear it. But there, kindly tell me about the living in Moscow—is it dear?"

"No, not very."

"Not very . . . And tell me, please, are there any gypsies in Moscow?"

"What sort of gypsies?"

"Why, such as hang about fairs?"

"Yes, there are some in Moscow . . ."

"Well, that's good news. I like gypsies, damn my soul! I like 'em."

And there was a gleam of reckless merriment in Pyotr Petrovich's eyes. But suddenly he fidgeted on the bench, then seemed to ponder, dropped his eyes, and held out his empty glass to me.

"Give me some of your rum," he said.

"But the tea's all finished."

"Never mind, I'll drink it without tea. Ah-h!"

Karataev laid his head in his hands and leaned his elbows on the table. I looked at him without speaking, and although I was expecting the sentimental exclamations, possibly even the tears of which the inebriate are so lavish, yet when he raised his head, I was, I must own, impressed by the profoundly mournful expression of his face.

"What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing. I was thinking of old times. An anecdote that . . . I would tell it you, but I am ashamed to trouble you . . ."

"What nonsense!"

"Yes," he went on with a sigh, "there are cases . . . like mine, for instance. Well, if you like, I will tell you. Though really I don't know . . ."

"Do tell me, dear Pyotr Petrovich."

"Very well, though it's a . . . Well, do you see . . ." he began, "but, upon my word, I don't know."

"Come, that's enough, dear Pyotr Petrovich."

"All right. This, then, was what befell me, so to say. I used to live in the country. All of a sudden, I took a fancy to a girl. Ah, what a girl she was . . . handsome, clever, and so good and sweet! Her name was Matryona. But she wasn't a lady—that is, you understand, she was a serf, simply a serf-girl. And not my girl; she belonged to someone else—that was the trouble. Well, so I loved her—it's really an incident that one can hardly . . . well, and she loved me, too. And so Matryona began begging me to buy her off from her mistress; and, indeed, the thought had crossed my mind, too. But her mistress was a rich, dreadful old body; she lived about fifteen versts from me. Well, so one fine day, as the saying is, I ordered my team of three horses to be harnessed abreast to the droshky—in the centre I'd a first-rate pacer, an extraordinarily spirited horse, called Lampurdos—I dressed myself in my best, and went off to Matryona's mistress. I arrived; it was a big house with wings and a garden. Matryona was waiting for me at the bend of the road; she tried to say a word to me, but she only kissed my hand and walked off. Well, so I went into the hall and asked if the mistress were at home. And a tall footman says to me, 'What name shall I say?' I answered, 'Say, brother, the landlord Karataev has called on a matter of business.' The footman walked away; I waited and thought, 'I wonder how it'll be? I daresay the old hag'll screw out a fearful price, for all she's so rich. Five hundred rubles she'll ask, I shouldn't be surprised.' Well, at last the footman returned, saying, 'If you please, walk up'. I fol-

lowed him into the drawing-room. A little yellowish old woman sat in an arm-chair blinking. 'What do you want?' To begin with, you know, I thought it necessary to say how glad I was to make her acquaintance. 'You are making a mistake; I am not the mistress here; I'm a relation of hers. What do you want?' I told her that I had to speak to the mistress herself. 'Marya Ilyinishna is not receiving today; she is unwell. What do you want?' There's nothing for it, I thought to myself; so I explained my proposition to her. The old lady heard me out. 'Matryona! What Matryona?'

"Matryona Fyodorova, Kulik's daughter.'

"Fyodor Kulik's daughter . . . But how did you come to know her?' 'By chance.' 'And is she aware of your intention?' 'Yes.' The old lady was silent for a minute. Then, 'Ah, I'll show her, the worthless hussy!' I was astounded, I must confess, 'Whatever for? Upon my word! I'm ready to pay a good sum, if you will be so good as to name it.'

"The old hag positively hissed at me. 'Do you imagine you will overwhelm us? As though we needed your money! I'll teach her, I'll show her! I'll beat the folly out of her!' The old lady choked with spite. 'Wasn't she well off with us, pray? The slut, God forgive my transgressions! I fired up, I'll confess. 'What are you threatening the poor girl for? How is she to blame?' The old lady crossed herself. 'Ah, Lord have mercy on me, do you suppose I can't do anything I like with my serfs!' 'But she's not yours!' 'Well, Marya Ilyinishna knows best about that; it's not your business, my good sir; but I'll show that chit of a Matryona whose serf she is!' I'll confess, I almost fell on the damned old woman, but I thought of Matryona, and my hands dropped. I was more frightened than I can tell you; I began entreating the old lady. 'Take what you like,' I said. 'But what use is she to you?' 'I like her, good Ma'am; put yourself in my position. Allow me to kiss your hand.' And I positively kissed the wretch's hand! 'Well,' mumbled the old witch, 'I'll tell Marya Ilyinishna—it's for her to decide; you come back in a couple of days.' I went home in great uneasiness. I began to suspect that I'd managed the thing badly; that I'd been wrong in letting her notice my state of mind, but I thought of that too late. Two days after, I went to see the mistress. I was shown into a boudoir. There were heaps of flowers and splendid furnishings; the lady herself was sitting in a wonderful easy-chair, with her head lolling back on a cushion; and the same relation was sitting there, too, and some colourless young miss, her mouth all awry, in a green gown—a companion, most likely. The old lady said

through her nose, 'Please be seated'. I sat down. She began questioning me as to how old I was, and where I'd been in the service, and what I meant to do, and all that very haughtily and solemnly. I answered minutely. The old lady took a handkerchief off the table, and fanned herself. 'Katerina Karpovna informed me,' says she, 'of your proposition; she informed me of it; but I make it my rule,' says she, 'not to allow my people to serve elsewhere. It is improper, and quite unsuitable in a well-ordered house; it is unbecoming. I have already given my orders,' says she. 'There will be no need for you to trouble yourself further,' says she. 'Oh, it is no trouble, really. But can it be, Matryona Fyodovova is so necessary to you?' 'No,' says she, 'she is not necessary.' 'Then why won't you let me have her?' 'Because I don't choose to; I don't choose—and that's all there is to it. I've already,' says she, 'given my orders: she is being sent to a village in the steppes.' I was thunderstruck. The old lady said a couple of words in French to the green miss; she went out. 'I am,' says she, 'a woman of strict principles, and my health is delicate; I can't stand being worried. You are still young, and I'm an old woman, and entitled to give you advice. Wouldn't it be better for you to settle down, get married; to look out a good match; wealthy brides are few, but a poor girl, of the highest moral character, could be found.' I stared, do you know, at the old lady, and didn't understand what she was driving at; I could hear she was talking about marriage, but the village in the steppes was ringing in my ears all the while. Get married... What the hell..."

Here he suddenly stopped in his story and looked at me.

"You're not married, are you?"

"No."

"There, of course, I could see it. I couldn't stand it. 'But, upon my word, Ma'am, what on earth are you talking about? How does marriage come in? I simply want to know from you whether you will let me have your serf-girl Matryona or not?' The old lady began sighing and groaning. 'Ah, he's worrying me! Ah, send him away! ah!' The relation flew to her, and began scolding me, while the lady kept on moaning, 'What have I done to deserve it? I suppose I'm not mistress in my own house? Ah! Ah!' I snatched my hat and ran out of the house like a madman.

"Perhaps," he continued, "you will blame me for being so warmly attached to a girl of low position; I don't mean to justify myself... but so it came to pass! Would you believe it, I had no peace by day

or by night. I was in torment! I thought I had ruined the poor girl. When I imagined her herding geese in a dirty smock, and being ill-treated by her mistress's orders, and the bailiff, a peasant in tarred boots, reviling her with foul abuse. I positively came out in a cold sweat. Well, finally I could not stand it. I found out what village she had been sent to, mounted my horse, and set off. I only got there the evening of the next day. Evidently they hadn't expected such a proceeding on my part, and had given no order in regard to me. I went straight to the bailiff in a neighbourly fashion; I go into the yard and look around; there was Matryona sitting on the steps leaning her head on her elbow. She was on the point of crying out, but I held up my finger and pointed outside, towards the open country. I went into the house; I chatted away a bit to the bailiff, told him ten thousand lies, seized the right moment, and went out to Matryona. The poor girl fairly hung onto my neck. She was pale and thin, my poor darling! I kept saying to her, do you know, 'There, it's all right, Matryona; it's all right, don't cry,' and my own tears simply flowed and flowed. Well, at last though I was ashamed, I said to her, 'Matryona, tears are no help in trouble, but we must act, as they say, resolutely; you must run away with me; that's how we must act.' Matryona fairly swooned away. 'How can it be! I shall be ruined; they will drive me to my grave.' 'You silly! Who will find you?' 'They will find me; they will be sure to find me. Thank you, Pyotr Petrovich—I shall never forget your kindness; but now you must leave me; such is my fate, it seems.' 'Ah, Matryona, Matryona, I thought you were a girl of character!' And, indeed, she had a great deal of character. She had a heart too, a heart of gold! 'Why should you stay here? It makes no difference; things can't be worse. Come, tell me—the bailiff's beaten you, has he?' Matryona crimsoned, and her lips trembled. 'But there'll be no life for my family on my account.' 'Why, what can happen to your family now—they can't send them away!' 'Yes; they'll send away my brother.' 'And your father?' 'Oh, they won't send away father; he's the only good tailor on the estate.'

"'There, you see; and it won't kill your brother.' Would you believe it, I was hard put to it to persuade her; she even brought forward a notion that I might have to answer for it. 'But that's not your affair,' said I. However, I did carry her off . . . not that time, but another; one night I came with a light cart and carried her off."

"You carried her off?"

"Yes. Well, so she lived in my house. It was a little house, and I

had few servants. My people, I will tell you frankly, respected me; they wouldn't have betrayed me for any reward. I was as happy as a prince. Matryona rested and recovered, and I grew more devoted to her than ever. And what a girl she was! It seemed to come by nature! She could sing, and dance, and play the guitar . . . I didn't show her to my neighbours; I was afraid they'd tell on me! But there was one fellow, my bosom friend, Gornostaev, Pantelei—you don't know him? He was simply crazy about her; he'd kiss her hand as though she were a lady; he would, really. And I must tell you, Gornostaev is not like me; he is a cultivated man, has read all Pushkin; when he'd start telling things to Matryona and me, we'd listen open-mouthed. He taught her to write; such a funny chap he was! And how I dressed her—better than the governor's wife, really; I had a pelisse made her of crimson velvet, edged with fur. Ah! How that pelisse suited her! It was made by a Moscow madame in a new fashion, with a waist. And what a wonderful creature Matryona was! Sometimes she'd fall to musing, and sit for hours together looking at the ground, without stirring a muscle; and I'd sit, too, and look at her, and could never gaze enough, just as if I were seeing her for the first time. Then she would smile, and my heart would give a jump as though someone were tickling me. Or else she'd suddenly fall to laughing, joking, dancing; she would embrace me so warmly, so passionately, that I felt dizzy. From morning to evening I thought of nothing but how I could please her. And would you believe it? I gave her presents simply to see how pleased she would be, the darling! All blushing with delight! How she would try on my present; how she would come back with her new possession on, and kiss me! Her father, Kulik, got wind of it, somehow; the old man came to see us, and how he wept . . . He wept from joy, what do you think? We gave him a lot of presents, and when he was leaving she brought out a five-ruble note for him and the funny fellow fell on his knees before her. In that way we lived for five months, and I should have been glad to live with her for ever, but for my cursed ill-luck!"

Pyotr Petrovich stopped.

"What happened?" I asked him sympathetically.

He waved his hand.

"Everything went to the devil. It was my own doing, too. My little Matryona was terribly fond of driving in sledges, and she used to drive herself; she used to put on her pelisse and her embroidered Torzhok mittens. and shout at the horses. We used to go out sledging

always in the evening, so as not to meet any one, you know. But once it was such a splendid day, you know, frosty and clear, and now wind . . . and we drove out. Matryona had the reins. I looked where she was driving. Could it be to Kukuyevka, her mistress's village? Yes, it was to Kukuyevka. I said to her, 'You mad girl, where are you going?' She gave me a look over her shoulder and laughed. As though as to say, 'Let me have a lark'. Well, thought I, come what may. To drive past her mistress's house was really a lark, wasn't it? Tell me yourself—wasn't it? So we drove on. The shaft-horse seemed to float through the air, and the trace-horses went, I can tell you, like a regular whirlwind. We were already in sight of Kukuyevka, when suddenly I see an old green coach crawling along with a groom on the footboard up behind. It was the mistress—the mistress driving towards us! My heart sank; but Matryona—she lashed the horses with the reins, and flew straight towards the coach! The coachman, he, you understand, sees us flying to meet him, he meant to move on one side, turned too sharp, and upset the coach in a snowdrift. The window was broken; the mistress shrieked, 'Ai! ai! ai! ai! ai!' The companion wailed, 'Help! help!' while we dashed past and showed them a clean fair of heels. We galloped on, but I thought, 'Evil will come of it. I shouldn't have let her drive to Kukuyevka.' And what do you think? Why, the mistress had recognised Matryona, and me, too, the old wretch, and made a complaint against me. 'My runaway serf-girl,' said she, 'is living at Mr. Karataev's'; and thereupon she made a suitable present. Lo and behold! The captain of police comes to me; and he was a man I knew, Stepan Sergeich Kuzovkin, a good fellow; that's to say, really a regular bad lot. So he came up and said it was like this and that, and, 'How could you do so, Pyotr Petrovich? The liability is serious, and the laws very distinct on the subject.' I tell him, 'Well, we'll have a talk about that, of course; but come, you'll take a little something after your drive.' He agreed to take something, but he said, 'Justice must be done, Pyotr Petrovich; think for yourself.' 'Justice, to be sure,' said I, 'of course . . . but I have heard say you've a little black horse. Would you be willing to exchange it for my Lampurdos? But there's no girl called Matryona Fyodorova in my keeping.' 'Come,' says he, 'Pyotr Petrovich, the girl's with you, we're not living in Switzerland, you know . . . though my little horse might be exchanged for Lampurdos; I might even accept your Lampurdos as a gift.' Well, I managed to get rid of him somehow that time. But the old lady made a greater fuss than ever; ten thousand rubles,

she said, she wouldn't grudge to have her way. You see, when she saw me, she suddenly took an idea into her head to marry me to her green companion, that I found out later; that was why she was so spiteful. What ideas won't these great ladies take into their heads! It comes through boredom, I suppose. Things went badly with me: I didn't spare money, and I kept Matryona in hiding. No, they harassed me, and never left me alone; I got into debt; I lost my health. So one night, as I lay in my bed, thinking, 'My God, why should I suffer so? What am I to do, since I can't get over loving her? I can't, and that's all there is to it!' into the room walked Matryona. I had hidden her for the time at a farm-house two versts from my house. I was frightened. 'What? Have they discovered you even there?' 'No, Pyotr Petrovich,' said she, 'no one disturbs me at Bubново; but how long can it last? My heart,' she said, 'is torn, Pyotr Petrovich; I am sorry for you, my dear one; never shall I forget your goodness, Pyotr Petrovich, but now I've come to say good-bye to you.' 'What do you mean, what do you mean, you mad girl? Good-bye, how good-bye?' 'Yes. I am going to give myself up.' 'But I'll lock you up in a garret, mad girl! Do you mean to destroy me? Do you want to kill me, or what?' The girl was silent; she looked on the floor. 'Come, speak, speak!' 'I can't bear to cause you any more trouble, Pyotr Petrovich.' Well, one might talk to her as one pleased... 'But do you know, little fool, do you know, you mad girl...'

And Pyotr Petrovich sobbed bitterly.

"Well, what do you think?" he went on, striking the table with his fist and trying to frown, while the tears still coursed down his flushed cheeks. "The girl gave herself up... She went and gave herself up..."

"The horses are ready," the post master cried triumphantly, entering the room.

We both stood up.

"What became of Matryona?" I asked.

Karataev waved his hand.

A year after my meeting with Karataev, I happened to go to Moscow. One day, before dinner, I went into a café in the Okhotny Row—an original Moscow café. In the billiard-room, through clouds of smoke, I caught glimpses of flushed faces, whiskers, old-fashioned Hussar coats, and new-fangled Slavonic costumes.

Thin little old men in sober surtouts were reading Russian newspapers. The waiters flitted airily about with trays, treading softly on the green runners. Merchants, with painful concentration, were drinking tea. Suddenly a man came out of the billiard-room, rather dishevelled, and not quite steady on his feet. He put his hands in his pockets, bent his head, and looked aimlessly about.

"Look, who is here! Pyotr Petrovich! How are you?"

Pyotr Petrovich almost fell on my neck, and, slightly staggering, drew me into a small private room.

"Come here," he said, carefully seating me in an easy-chair, "here you will be comfortable. Waiter, beer! No, I mean champagne! There, I'll confess, I never expected, I never expected... Have you been here long? Are you staying much longer? Well, God has brought us, as they say, together."

"Yes, do you remember..."

"To be sure, I remember; to be sure, I remember!" he interrupted me hurriedly. "It's a thing of the past..."

"Well, what are you doing here, my dear Pyotr Petrovich?"

"I'm living, as you can see. Life's first-rate here; they're a merry lot. Here I've found peace."

And he sighed and raised his eyes towards the ceiling.

"Are you in the service?"

"No, I'm not in the service yet, but I think I shall enter. But what's the service? People are the chief thing. What people I have got to know here!"

A boy came in with a bottle of champagne on a black tray.

"Here's another good fellow. Isn't that true, Vasya, that you're a good fellow? To your health!"

The boy stood a minute, decorously shook his head, smiled, and went out.

"Yes, there are capital people here," pursued Pyotr Petrovich, "people of soul, of feeling. Would you like me to introduce you?—such jolly chaps. They'll all be glad to know you. I say... Bobrov is dead; that's a sad thing."

"What Bobrov?"

"Sergei Bobrov; he was a capital fellow; he took me under his wing as an ignoramus from the wilds. And Pantelei Gornostaev is dead. All dead, all!"

"Have you been living all the time in Moscow? You haven't been back to the country?"

"To the country! My country place is sold."

"Sold?"

"By auction. There! What a pity you didn't buy it."

"What are you going to live on, Pyotr Petrovich?"

"I shan't starve; God will provide. When I've no money, I shall have friends. And what is money? Dust and ashes! Gold is dust!"

He shut his eyes, felt in his pocket, and held out to me in the palm of his hand two fifteen-kopeck pieces and one ten-kopeck piece.

"What's that? Isn't it dust and ashes!" (And the money flew on the floor.) "But you had better tell me, have you read Polezhaev?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen Mochalov in *Hamlet*?"

"No, I haven't."

"You've not seen him, not seen him!..." (And Karataev's face turned pale; his eyes strayed uneasily; he turned away; a faint spasm passed over his lips.) "Ah, Mochalov, Mochalov! 'To die—to sleep!'" he said in a thick voice:

*No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;*

"To sleep—to sleep," he muttered several times.

"Tell me, please," I began; but he went on with fire:

*Who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remember'd.*

And he dropped his head on the table. He began stammering and talking at random. "Within a month!" he delivered with fresh fire:

*A little month; or ere those shoes were old,
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears; why she, even she—
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer!*

He raised a glass of champagne to his lips, but did not drink off the wine, and went on:

For Hecuba!

What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba

That he should weep for her?...

But I'm a dull and muddy meddled rascal,

Who calls me coward? gives me the lie i' the throat?

... Why I should take it; for it cannot be,

But I am pigeon-liver'd and lack gall

To make oppression bitter.

Karataev put down the glass and grabbed at his head. I fancied I understood him.

"Well, well," he said at last, "one must not rake up the past. Isn't that so?" (And he laughed.) "To your health!"

"Shall you stay in Moscow?" I asked him.

"I shall die in Moscow!"

"Karataev!" called a voice in the next room. "Karataev, where are you? Come here, my dear fellow!"

"They're calling me," he said, getting up heavily from his seat. "Good-bye; come and see me if you can; I live at—."

But the next day, through unforeseen circumstances, I was obliged to leave Moscow, and I never saw Pyotr Petrovich Karataev again.

THE TRYST

I was sitting in a birch copse in autumn, about the middle of September. From early morning a fine rain had been falling, with intervals of warm sunshine; the weather was unsettled. The sky was at one time overcast with soft white clouds, at another it suddenly cleared in parts, and then between the parting clouds could be seen azure, bright and tender as a beautiful eye. I sat looking about and listening. The leaves rustled faintly over my head; from the sound of them alone one could tell what time of year it was. It was not the gay laughing tremor of the spring, nor the subdued whispering, the prolonged gossip of the summer, nor the chill and timid faltering of late autumn, but a scarcely audible, drowsy chatter. A slight breeze was faintly blowing in the tree-tops. Wet with the rain, the copse in its inmost recesses was forever changing as the sun shone or hid behind a cloud; at one moment it was all a radiance, as though suddenly everything were smiling in it; the slender stems of the sparsely-growing birch-trees took all at once the soft lustre of white silk, the tiny leaves lying on the earth were of a sudden flecked and flaring with purplish gold, and the graceful stalks of the high, curly bracken, decked already in their autumn colour, the hue of an over-ripe grape, seemed interlacing in endless criss-cross before one's eyes; then suddenly again everything around was faintly bluish; the glaring tints died away instantaneously, the birch-trees stood all white and lustreless, white as fresh-fallen snow, before the cold rays of the winter sun have caressed it; and slyly, stealthily, the finest rain began drizzling and whispering through the wood. The leaves on the birches were still almost all green, though perceptibly paler; only here and there stood one young tree, all red or golden, and it was a sight to see how it flamed in the sunshine when the sunbeams suddenly pierced with tangled flecks of light through the thick network of

delicate tracery of twigs, freshly washed by the sparkling rain. Not one bird could be heard; all were in hiding and silent, except that at times there rang out the metallic, bell-like sound of the *jeering tomtit*. Before halting in this birch copse I had walked through a wood of tall aspen-trees with my dog. I confess I have no great liking for that tree, the aspen, with its pale-lilac trunk and the greyish-green metallic leaves which it flings high as it can, and unfolds in a quivering fan in the air; I do not care for the eternal shaking of its round, slovenly leaves, awkwardly hooked on to long stalks. It is only fine on some summer evenings when, rising singly above low undergrowth, it faces the reddening beams of the setting sun, and shines and quivers, bathed from root to top in one unbroken yellow glow, or when, on a clear windy day, it is all rippling, rustling, and whispering against the blue sky, and every leaf is, as it were, taken by a longing to break away and soar into the distance. But, as a rule, I don't care for the tree, and so, not stopping to rest in the aspen wood, I made my way to the birch copse, nestled down under one tree whose branches started low down near the ground, and were consequently capable of shielding me from the rain, and after admiring the surrounding view a little, I fell into that sweet untroubled sleep only known to hunters.

I cannot say how long I was asleep, but when I opened my eyes, all the depths of the wood were filled with sunlight, and in all directions across the joyously rustling leaves there were glimpses and, as it were, flashes of intense blue sky; the clouds had vanished, driven away by the blustering wind; the weather had changed to fair, and there was that feeling of peculiar dry freshness in the air which fills the heart with a sense of buoyancy, and is almost always a sure token of a still bright evening after a rainy day. I was just about to get up and try my luck again when suddenly my eyes fell on a motionless human figure. I looked attentively; it was a young peasant girl. She was sitting twenty paces off, her head bent in thought, and her hands lying in her lap; one of them, half-open, held a big nosegay of wild flowers, which softly stirred on her checked petticoat with every breath. Her clean white blouse, buttoned up at the throat and wrists, lay in short soft folds about her figure; two rows of big yellow beads fell from her neck to her bosom. She was very pretty. Her thick fair hair of a lovely, almost ashen hue was parted into two carefully combed semicircles, under the narrow crimson fillet, which was brought down almost on to her forehead, white as ivory; the rest of

her face was faintly tanned that golden hue which is only taken by a delicate skin. I could not see her eyes—she did not raise them; but I saw her delicate high eyebrows, and her long lashes; they were wet, and on one of her cheeks there shone in the sun the trace of a quickly drying tear, reaching right down to her rather pale lips. Her head was very charming altogether; even her rather thick and snub nose did not spoil her. I was especially taken with the expression of her face; it was so artless and gentle, so sad and so full of childish wonder at its own sadness. She was obviously waiting for someone; something made a faint crackling in the wood; she raised her head at once and looked round; in the transparent shade I caught a rapid glimpse of her eyes, large, clear and timorous, like a fawn's. For a few instants she listened, not moving her wide-open eyes from the spot whence the faint sound had come; then she sighed, turned her head back slowly, bent still lower, and began sorting her flowers. Her eyelids turned red, her lips twitched faintly, and a fresh tear rolled from under her thick eyelashes, and stood brightly shining on her cheek. Rather a long while passed thus; the poor girl did not stir, except for a despairing movement of her hands now and then—and she kept listening, listening. Again there was a crackling sound in the wood; she started. The sound did not cease, grew more distinct, and came closer; at last one could hear quick resolute footsteps. She drew herself up and seemed frightened; her intent gaze was all a-quiver, all aglow with expectation. Through the thicket quickly appeared the figure of a man. She gazed at it, suddenly flushed, gave a radiant, blissful smile, tried to rise, and sank back again at once, turned white and confused, and only raised her quivering, almost supplicating eyes to the approaching man when the latter stopped beside her.

I looked at him with curiosity from my ambush. I confess he did not make an agreeable impression on me. He was, to judge by external signs, the pampered valet of some rich young gentleman. His attire betrayed pretensions to style and fashionable carelessness; he wore a shortish coat of a bronze colour, doubtless from his master's wardrobe, buttoned up to the top, a pink cravat with lilac ends, and a black velvet cap with a gold ribbon, pulled forward right on to his eyebrows. The round collar of his white shirt mercilessly propped up his ears and cut his cheeks, and his starched cuffs hid his whole hand to the red crooked fingers, adorned by gold and silver rings, with turquoise forget-me-nots. His red, fresh, impudent-looking face belonged to the order of faces which, as far as I have observed, are

almost always repulsive to men and unfortunately are very often attractive to women. He was obviously trying to give a scornful and bored expression to his coarse features; he was incessantly screwing up his milky-grey eyes—small enough at all times; he scowled, dropped the corners of his mouth, affected to yawn, and with careless, though not perfectly natural nonchalance, pushed back his modish red curls on the temples, or pinched the yellow hairs sprouting on his thick upper lip—in fact, he gave himself insufferable airs. He began his antics directly he caught sight of the young peasant girl waiting for him; slowly, with a swaggering step, he went up to her, stood a moment, shrugged his shoulders, stuffed both hands in his coat pockets, and barely vouchsafing the poor girl a cursory and indifferent glance, he dropped on to the ground.

"Well," he began, still gazing away, swinging his leg and yawning, "have you been here long?"

The girl could not at once answer.

"Yes, a long while, Victor Alexandrich," she said at last in a voice hardly audible.

"Ah!" (He took off his cap, majestically passed his hand over his thick, stiffly curled hair, which grew almost down to his eyebrows, and looking round him with dignity, he carelessly covered his precious head again.) "And I quite forgot all about it. Besides, it rained!" (He yawned again.) "Lots to do; there's no looking after everything; and he's always scolding. We set off tomorrow."

"Tomorrow?" uttered the young girl. And she fastened her startled eyes upon him.

"Yes, tomorrow. Come, come, come, please!" he added in a tone of vexation, seeing she was shaking all over and softly bending her head; "please, Akulina, don't cry. You know, I can't stand that." (And he wrinkled up his snub nose.) "Else I'll go away at once... What silliness—snivelling!"

"There, I won't, I won't!" cried Akulina hurriedly, gulping down her tears with an effort, "So you are starting tomorrow?" she added after a brief silence. "When will God grant that we see each other again, Victor Alexandrich?"

"We shall see each other, we shall see each other. If not next year—then later. The master wants to enter the service in Petersburg, I fancy," he went on, pronouncing his words with careless condescension through his nose, "and perhaps we shall go abroad, too."

"You will forget me, Victor Alexandrich," said Akulina mournfully.

"No, why so? I won't forget you; only you be sensible, don't be a fool; obey your father . . . And I won't forget you—no-o." (And he placidly stretched and yawned again.)

"Don't forget me, Victor Alexandrich," she went on imploringly. "I think none could love you as I do. I have given you everything. You tell me to obey my father, Victor Alexandrich. But how can I obey my father?"

"Why not?" (He uttered these words, as it were, from his stomach, lying on his back with his hands behind his head.)

"But how can I, Victor Alexandrich?—You know yourself."

She broke off. Victor played with his steel watch-chain.

"You're not a fool, Akulina," he said at last, "so don't talk nonsense. I desire your good—do you understand me? To be sure, you're not a fool—not altogether a mere rustic, so to say; and your mother, too, wasn't always a peasant. Still you've no education—so you ought to do what you're told."

"But I'm afraid, Victor Alexandrich."

"Oh-oh! That's nonsense, my dear; a queer thing to be afraid of! What have you got there?" he added, moving closer to her. "Flowers?"

"Yes," Akulina responded dejectedly. "That's some wild tansy I picked," she went on, brightening up a little, "it's good for calves. And this is marigold—against the king's evil. Look, what a nice flower! I've never seen such a nice flower before. These are forget-me-nots, and that's mint. And these I picked for you," she added, taking from under yellow tansy a small bunch of blue corn-flowers, tied up with a thin blade of grass. "Do you like them?"

Victor languidly held out his hand, took the flowers, carelessly sniffed at them, and began twirling them in his fingers, looking upwards with thoughtful solemnity. Akulina watched him. In her mournful eyes there was such tender devotion, adoring submission and love. She was afraid of him and did not dare to cry, and was saying good-bye to him and admiring him for the last time; while he lay, lolling like a sultan, and with magnanimous patience and condescension accepted her adoration. I must own, I glared indignantly at his red face, on which, under the affectation of scornful indifference, one could discern vanity satisfied and surfeited. Akulina was so sweet at that instant; her whole soul was confidingly and passionately

laid bare before him, full of longing and caressing tenderness, while he . . . he dropped the corn-flowers in the grass, pulled out of the side pocket of his coat a round eye-glass set in a brass rim, and began sticking it in his eye; but however much he tried to hold it with his frowning eyebrow, his pursed-up cheek and even nose, the eye-glass kept tumbling out and falling into his hand.

"What is it?" Akulina asked at last in wonder.

"An eye-glass," he answered with dignity.

"What for?"

"Why, to see better."

"Show me."

Victor scowled, but gave her the glass.

"See you don't break it."

"No fear, I won't break it." (She put it to her eye.) "I see nothing," she said innocently.

"But you must shut your eye," he retorted in the tones of a displeased teacher. (She shut the eye before which she held the glass.)

"Not that one, not that one, you fool! The other!" cried Victor, and he took away his eye-glass, without allowing her to correct her mistake.

Akulina flushed a little, gave a faint laugh, and turned away.

"It's not for the likes of us," she said.

"I should think not, indeed!"

The poor girl was silent and gave a deep sigh.

"Ah, Victor Alexandrich, however am I going to live without you!" she said suddenly.

Victor rubbed the glass on the lapel of his coat and put it back in his pocket.

"Yes, yes," he said at last, "at first it will be hard for you, certainly." (He patted her condescendingly on the shoulder; she softly took his hand from her shoulder and timidly kissed it.) "There, there, you're a good girl, certainly," he went on, with a complacent smile; "but what's to be done? You can see for yourself! Me and the master could never stay on here; it will soon be winter now, and winter in the country—you know yourself—is simply disgusting. It's quite another thing in Petersburg! There, there are simply such wonders as a silly girl like you could never fancy in your dreams! Such houses, and streets, and society, and civilisation—simply marvellous!" (Akulina listened with devouring attention, her lips slightly parted,



Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861), a great Ukrainian poet and revolutionary democrat Turgenev often met him in St. Petersburg in the winter of 1859-60 in the circle of Ukrainian intellectuals, and helped to popularise his work



Marko Vovchok (Maria Markovich, 1834-1907), a classic of Ukrainian literature Turgenev was an enthusiastic admirer of her work, and translated it into Russian.



Olga Alexandrovna Turgeneva. Daguerrotype of mid-nineteenth century. Fragment. She was a distant relative of the writer, and at one time he intended marrying her.



The environs of Spasskoye-Lutovinovo



Lev Tolstoy (1828-1910) Photograph by M. Tulikov, 1862



Ivan Turgenev in 1856 when he first met Lev Tolstoy
Photograph by S. Levitsky



The remains of the house in Orel where, legend has it, the story of *A Nest of the Gentry* was actually lived. A recent photograph

Написано в публ. библ. № 1.
1859

А КАМЪРЪ,

Актинт

А. С. Мухоморова

Написано в библ. в Мухоморова № 1. 1859

Книжка - в 20 кн. в Мухоморова № 1. 1859



Написано в 1-й библ. в Мухоморова
в 1859 г.

The title page of the novel *On the Eve* written in Turgenev's hand, 1859



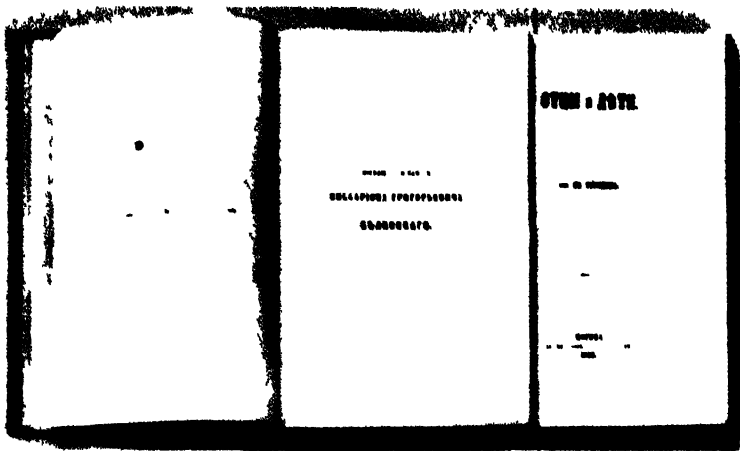
Nikolai Katranov, a Bulgarian student, who was believed to be the prototype of Dmitry Insarov in *On The Eve*. A lithograph made from the portrait by G. Evstatiev, 1840-50s



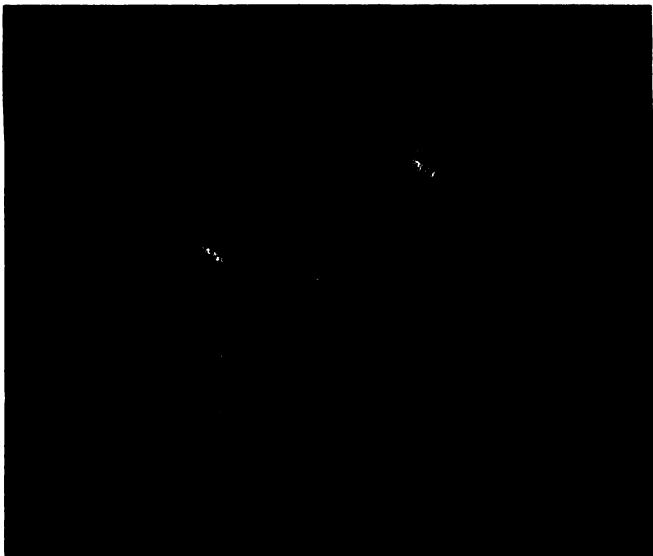
Nikolai Chernyshevsky (1828-1889), a Russian philosopher, literary critic and novelist. Photograph by V. Lauffert, 1859. At the end of the 1850s, Chernyshevsky together with Dobrolyubov headed the revolutionary-democratic group of the journal *Sovremennik*.



Nikolai Dobrolyubov (1836-1861), a gifted critic, and an associate of Nekrassov and Chernyshevsky. Lithograph by P. Borel.



The title sheet of the first edition of *Fathers and Sons* with the dedication to Vissarion Belinsky, 1862



"The Old and the Young in Dispute" A painting by N Yaroshenko, 1881



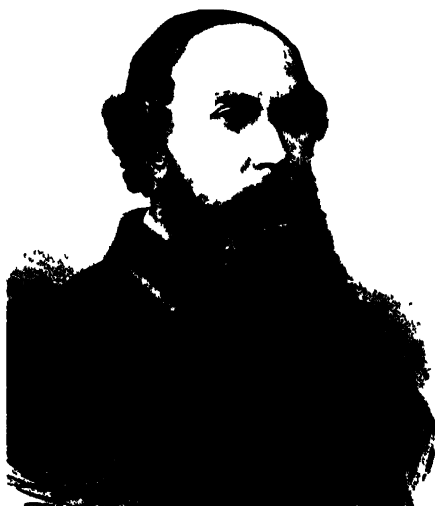
N Boklevsky's watercolour illustrations for the novel *Fathers and Sons*.
1870s



This pond belonged to Petrovskoye, an estate close to Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, whose description tallies with that of the Kirsanovs' estate in *Fathers and Sons*



Turgenev's villa in Baden-Baden, which a change in his financial circumstances compelled him to sell. The house stands today. Engraving by F. Pannemacher, 1883



William Ralston (1828-1889), English critic, folklorist, and scholar of Russian literature, who translated Turgenev's works into English. He and Turgenev were lifelong friends.



à mon cher ami
souvenir affectueux
Pauline Viardot
L 23 ju. 1864.

Pauline Viardot Photograph 1863



Turgenev A drawing made by Pauline Viardot in 1857



Polina Turgeneva (1842-1919) The illegitimate daughter of Ivan Turgenev and Evdokia Ivanova who was in his mother's service. For a time the girl lived in the Viardot family and later her father put her in a boarding school and took her upbringing upon himself.



The newspaper *Orlovsky Vestnik* Chapters from *New Soil* were first printed here in 1876



The park at Spasskoye Lutovinovo protected by the state



Iv in Turgenev An engraving made in 1874



Mikhail Saltykov-Schedrin (1826-1889), a progressive Russian writer who was compared by his contemporaries with Jonathan Swift. Together with Nekrassov, he headed the journal *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. This photograph was made early in the 1870s.



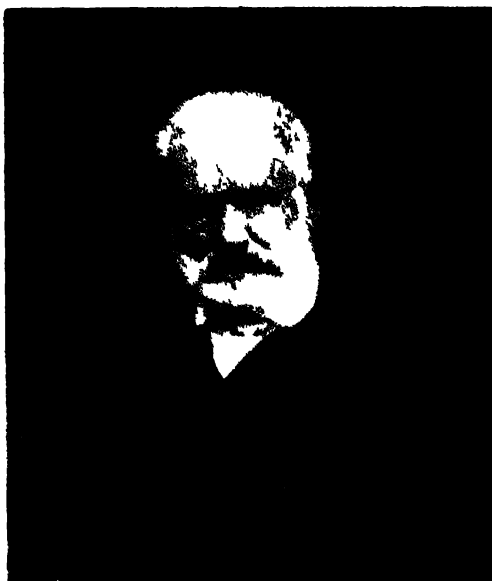
Pyotr Lavrov (1823-1900), a philosopher, and one of the leaders of the revolutionary Narodnik movement in Russia. He had to leave Russia and live abroad. Associated with Turgenev for several years. This photograph was made in Paris in the early 1870s.



Bougival on the banks of the Seine in the environs of Paris Turgenev lived in a villa here (its fence is seen in the left part of the photograph) from 1875 to 1883



Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) Turgenev knew him well and he popularised his works in Russia



Victor Hugo (1802-1885) Turgenev and Hugo met in the 1870s and a warm friendship that lasted till the end of their days sprang up between the two writers.



Alphonse Daudet, Gustave Flaubert, Emile Zola and Ivan Turgenev at one of their traditional dinners. Photograph

like a child.) "But what's the use," he added, turning over on the ground, "of my telling you all this? Of course, you can't understand it!"

"Why so, Victor Alexandrich? I understand; I understand everything."

"My eye, what a girl it is!"

Akulina looked down.

"You used to talk to me differently once, Victor Alexandrich," she said, not lifting her eyes.

"Once? once!... My goodness!" he remarked, as though in indignation.

They both were silent.

"It's time I was going," said Victor, and he was already rising on his elbow.

"Wait a little longer," Akulina besought him.

"What for? Why, I've said good-bye to you."

"Wait a little," repeated Akulina.

Victor lay down again and began whistling. Akulina never took her eyes off him. I could see that she was gradually being overcome by emotion; her lips twitched, her pale cheeks faintly glowed.

"Victor Alexandrich," she began at last in a broken voice, "it's too bad of you... it is too bad of you, Victor Alexandrich, indeed it is!"

"What's too bad?" he asked frowning, and he slightly raised his head and turned it towards her.

"It's too bad, Victor Alexandrich. You might at least say one kind word to me at parting; you might have said one little word to me, a poor luckless..."

"But what am I to say to you?"

"I don't know; you know that best, Victor Alexandrich. Here you are going away, and not one kind word... What have I done to deserve this?"

"You're such a queer creature! What can I do?"

"One word at least."

"There, she keeps on at the same thing," he commented with annoyance, and he got up.

"Don't be angry, Victor Alexandrich," she added hurriedly, suppressing her tears with difficulty.

"I'm not angry, only you're silly... What do you want? You know I can't marry you, can I? I can't, can I? What is it you want then,

eh?" (He thrust his face forward as though expecting an answer, and spread his fingers out.)

"I want nothing... nothing," she answered falteringly, and she ventured to hold out her trembling hands to him, "but only a word at parting."

And her tears fell in a torrent.

"There, off she goes crying," said Victor coolly, pushing down his cap on to his eyes.

"I want nothing," she went on, sobbing and covering her face with her hands, "but how shall I bear it at home? How shall I bear it? What will happen to me? What will become of me, poor wretch? They will marry me off to a man I hate... poor forsaken... poor me!"

"Sing away, sing away," muttered Victor in an undertone, fidgeting with impatience as he stood.

"And he never said one kind word, one word... He might say, 'Akulina... I...'"

Sudden heart-breaking sobs prevented her from finishing; she fell with her face in the grass and bitterly, bitterly she wept. Her whole body shook convulsively, her neck fairly heaved... Her long-suppressed grief broke out in a torrent at last. Victor stood over her a while, shrugged his shoulders, turned away and strode off.

A few instants passed. She grew calmer, raised her head, jumped up, looked round and wrung her hands; she tried to run after him, but her legs gave way under her—she dropped on her knees. I could not refrain from rushing up to her; but, almost before she had time to take a look at me, she got up with a faint shriek—I cannot imagine where she found the strength—and vanished behind the trees, leaving her flowers scattered on the ground.

I stood a minute, picked up the bunch of corn-flowers, and went out of the wood into open country. The sun had sunk low in the pale clear sky; its rays, too, seemed to have grown pale and chill; they did not shine; they were diffused in an unbroken, watery light. It was within half an hour of evening, but there was scarcely any of the glow of sunset. A gusty wind scurried to meet me across the yellow parched stubble; little curled-up leaves, scudding hurriedly before it, flew by across the road and along the edge of the copse; the side of the copse facing the fields like a wall was all trembling and sparkling with tiny gleams, distinct, but not glowing; on the reddish grass, the plant stalks, the straws—everywhere innumerable threads of autumn spiderwebs were glittering and stirring. I stopped. I felt sad at heart:

through the mirthless though still wholesome smile of fading nature, the dismal dread of coming winter seemed to steal upon me. High overhead flew a cautious raven, heavily and sharply cleaving the air with his wings; he turned his head, looked sideways at me, flapped his wings and, cawing harshly, vanished behind the wood; a great flock of pigeons flew up briskly from the threshing-floor, and suddenly eddying round in a column, scattered busily about the stubble. A sure sign of autumn! Someone came driving over the bare hillside, his empty cart rattling loudly . . .

I returned home; but it was long before the figure of poor Akulina faded out of my mind, and her corn-flowers, long since withered, are still in my keeping.

THE HAMLET OF SCHIGRI UYEZD

On one of my excursions I received an invitation to dine at the house of a rich landowner and hunter, Alexander Mikhailich G—. His property was about five versts from the small village where I was staying at the time. I put on a frock-coat, an article without which I advise no one to travel, even on a hunting expedition, and betook myself to Alexander Mikhailich's. The dinner was fixed for six o'clock; I arrived at five, and found already a great number of gentlemen in uniforms, in civilian dress, and other, less definitive garments. My host met me cordially, but soon hurried away to the butler's pantry. He was expecting a great dignitary and was in a state of agitation not quite in keeping with his independent position in society and his wealth. Alexander Mikhailich had never married and did not care for women; his house was the centre of a bachelor society. He lived in grand style; he had enlarged and sumptuously redecorated his ancestral mansion, spent fifteen thousand rubles on wine from Moscow every year, and enjoyed the highest public regard. Alexander Mikhailich had retired from the civil service ages ago, and had no ambition to gain official honours of any kind. What could have induced him to go out of his way to procure a guest of high official position, and to be in a state of agitation from early morning in the day of the dinner-party? That remains buried in the obscurity of the unknown, as a friend of mine, an attorney, was in the habit of saying when he was asked whether he accepted bribes from willing offerers.

On parting from my host, I began walking through the rooms. Almost all the guests were complete strangers to me; about twenty persons were already seated at the card-tables. Among these devotees of preference were two officers, with aristocratic but rather dissipated countenances, a few civilian officials, with tight high

cravats and drooping dyed moustaches, such as are only to be found in persons of resolute character and strict conservative opinions (these conservative persons picked up their cards with dignity, and, without turning their heads, glared sideways at everyone who approached), and five or six uyezd officials, with round bellies, fat, moist little hands, and staid, immovable little legs (these worthies spoke in a subdued voice, smiled benignly in all directions, held their cards close up to their very shirt-fronts, and when they trumped did not flap their cards on the table, but, on the contrary, shed them with an undulatory motion on the green cloth, and packed their tricks together with a slight decorous swish). The rest of the company were sitting on sofas, or hanging in groups about the doors or at the windows; one gentleman, no longer young, though of feminine appearance, stood in a corner, fidgeting, blushing and twisting the seal of his watch over his stomach in embarrassment, though no one was paying any attention to him; some others in swallow-tail coats and checked trousers, the handiwork of the Moscow tailor Firs Klyukhin, Master of the Tailors Corporation, were talking together with extraordinary ease and liveliness, turning their bald, greasy heads from side to side unconstrainedly as they talked; a young man of twenty, short-sighted and fair-haired, dressed from head to foot in black, was obviously shy but kept smiling sarcastically . . .

I was beginning to feel bored, when suddenly I was joined by a young man, one Voinitsin by name, a student without a degree, who resided in the house of Alexander Mikhailich in the capacity of . . . it would be hard to say precisely, of what. He was a first-rate shot, and could train dogs. I had known him earlier in Moscow. He was one of those young men who, faced with an examiner, "played dumb," that is to say, did not say a single word to the professor's questions. Such persons were also designated "the bewhiskered students". (You will gather that this was in long past days.) This was how it used to be: they would call Voinitsin, for example. Voinitsin, who had sat upright and motionless in his place, bathed in a hot perspiration from head to foot, slowly and aimlessly looked about him, got up, hurriedly buttoned up his uniform, and edged up to the examiner's table. "Take a card, please," the professor would say to him pleasantly. Voinitsin would stretch out his hand and with trembling fingers fumble at the pile of question cards. "No selecting, if you please," observed, in a rasping voice, an assistant-examiner, an irritable old gentleman, a professor in some other faculty, conceiving

a sudden dislike for the unlucky bewhiskered student. Voinitsin resigned himself to his fate, took a card, showed the number on it, and went and sat down by the window, while his predecessor was answering his question. At the window Voinitsin never took his eyes off his paper, except that at times he looked slowly round as before, though, he did not move a muscle. But his predecessor would finish at last, and would be dismissed with, "Good! you can go," or even "Good, very good indeed!" according to his abilities. Then they call Voinitsin; Voinitsin gets up and with resolute step approaches the table. "Read your question," they tell him. Voinitsin raises the card in both hands up to his very nose, slowly reads it, and slowly drops his hands. "Well, now, your answer, please," the same professor remarks languidly, throwing himself backwards and crossing his arms over his breast. There reigns the silence of the tomb. "Why are you silent?" Voinitsin is mute. The assistant-examiner begins to be restive. "Well, say something!" Voinitsin is as still as if he were dead. All his companions gaze inquisitively at the back of his close-cropped, motionless head. The assistant-examiner's eyes are almost starting out of his head; he positively hates Voinitsin. "Well, this is strange, really," observes the other examiner. "Why do you stand as if you were dumb? Come, don't you know it? If so, say so." "Let me take another card," the poor devil articulates thickly. The professors look at each other. "Very well," the head-examiner answers with a wave of the hand. Voinitsin again takes a card, again goes to the window, again returns to the table, and again is silent as the grave. The assistant-examiner would like to devour him alive. At last they send him away and mark him a notight. You would think, "Now, at least, he will go". Not a bit of it! He goes back to his place, sits just as immovably to the end of the examination, and, as he goes out, exclaims, "Goodness! What ill-luck!" And the whole of that day he wanders about Moscow, clutching every now and then at his head, and bitterly cursing his luckless fate. He never, of course, touches a book, and the next day the same story is repeated.

So this was the Voinitsin who joined me. We talked about Moscow, about hunting.

"Would you like me to introduce you to the first wit of these parts?" he whispered to me suddenly.

"If you will be so kind."

Voinitsin led me up to a little man, with a high tuft of hair on his forehead and moustaches, in a cinnamon-coloured frock-coat and

striped cravat. His bilious, mobile features certainly evinced an astute and caustic mind. His lips were perpetually curved in a flitting sarcastic smile; his little black eyes, screwed up impudently, looked out from under uneven lashes. Beside him stood a one-eyed country gentleman, broad, soft, and sweet. Who laughed in anticipation at the witticisms of the little man, and seemed positively melting with delight. Voinitsin presented me to the wit, whose name was Pyotr Petrovich Lupikhin. We exchanged the preliminary civilities.

"Allow me to present to you my best friend," said Lupikhin suddenly in a strident voice, seizing the sugary gentleman by the hand.

"Come, don't resist, Kiril Selifanich," he added, "we're not going to bite you. I commend him to you," he went on, while the embarrassed Kiril Selifanich bowed with about as much grace as if his stomach was in danger of splitting. "He's a most superior gentleman. He enjoyed excellent health up to the age of fifty, then suddenly conceived the idea of doctoring his eyes, in consequence of which he has lost one. Since then he has been doctoring his peasants with similar success. They, to be sure, repay with similar devotion."

"What a fellow he is!" muttered Kiril Selifanich. And he laughed.

"Speak out, my friend, speak out!" Lupikhin rejoined. "Why, they may even elect you a judge, I shouldn't wonder, and they will, too, you will see. Well, to be sure, the secretaries will do the thinking for you, we may assume; but you know you'll have to be able to speak, if only to express the ideas of others. Suppose the governor comes and asks, 'Why is it the judge stammers?' And they'd say, let's assume, 'He's had a paralytic stroke.' 'Then bleed him,' he'd say. And it would be highly indecorous, in your position, you'll admit."

The sugary gentleman was positively rolling with mirth.

"You see he laughs," Lupikhin pursued with a malignant glance at Kiril Selifanich's heaving stomach. "And why shouldn't he laugh?" he added, turning to me. "He has enough to eat, good health, and no children; his peasants aren't mortgaged—to be sure, he doctors them—and his wife is cracked." (Kiril Selifanich turned a little away as though he did not hear this last, but he still continued to chuckle.) "After all, I laugh, too, while my wife has eloped with a land-surveyor." (He bared his teeth.) "Didn't you know that? So she did! One fine day she ran away with him and left me a letter. 'Dear Pyotr Petrovich,' she said, 'forgive me: carried away by passion, I am leaving with my true love...' And the land-surveyor only took her

fancy through not cutting his nails and wearing tight trousers. Are you surprised at my outspokenness? But mercy on us! Rustic fellows like us are a plain-speaking lot. But let us move away a bit. It's not for us to stand beside a future judge..."

He took me by the arm, and we moved away to a window.

"I've the reputation of a wit here," he said to me in the course of conversation. "Do not believe that. I'm simply an embittered man, and I do my railing aloud: that's how it is I'm so free and easy in my speech. And why should I mince matters, if you come to that; I don't care a straw for anyone's opinion, and don't seek to gain anything; I'm spiteful—what of that? A spiteful man, at least, needs no wit. And you won't believe how refreshing it is... There, look at our host! There! What is he running to and fro like that for? Why in God's name does he keep looking at his watch, smiling, perspiring, putting on a solemn face, keeping us all starved for our dinner? So he's expecting a real court grandee—what of that? Look, look, he's running again—bounding, positively, look!"

And Lupikhin laughed shrilly.

"The only pity is, there are no ladies," he resumed with a deep sigh. "It's a bachelor party, else that's when your humble servant really gets going. Look, look," he cried suddenly, "Prince Kozelsky's come—that tall man there, with a beard, in yellow gloves. You can see at once he's been abroad... and he always arrives late. He's as dull-witted, I tell you, as a pair of merchant's horses, and yet you should see how condescendingly he talks with the likes of us, how graciously he deigns to smile at the civilities of our starving mothers and daughters! And he sometimes cracks witticisms too, for all that he only stays here for a little time; and oh, his witticisms! It's for all the world like hacking at a rope with a blunt knife. He cannot stand the sight of me... I'm going to bow to him."

And Lupikhin ran off to greet the prince.

"And here comes my special enemy," he observed, returning. "Do you see that fat man with the brown face and the bristles on his head, over there, who's got his cap clutched in his hand and is creeping along by the wall and glaring in all directions like a wolf? I sold him for 400 rubles a horse worth 1,000, and that stupid animal has a perfect right now to despise me; though all the while he is so destitute of all mental faculties, especially in the morning before his tea, or immediately after dinner, that if you say 'Good morning!' to him, he'll answer, 'What?' And here comes the general," pursued Lupikhin,

"the civilian general, a retired, destitute general. He has a daughter of beet-root sugar, and a scrofulous manufactory . . . Beg pardon, I've got it wrong . . . but there, you understand. Ah! and the architect's turned up here! A German, yet he wears moustaches and does not understand his business—an amazing phenomenon! . . . Though what need for him to understand his business so long as he takes bribes and sticks in pillars everywhere to suit the tastes of our pillars of society!"

Lupikhin chuckled again. But suddenly a wave of excitement passed over the whole house. The grandee had arrived. The host positively gushed forth into the hall. After him ran a few devoted members of the household and eager guests. The noisy talk was transformed into a subdued pleasant hum, like the buzzing of bees in spring within their hives. Only the turbulent wasp, Lupikhin, and the splendid drone, Kozelsky, did not subdue their voices . . . And behold, at last, the queen-bee!—the great dignitary—entered. Hearts bounded to meet him, sitting bodies rose; even the gentleman who had bought a horse from Lupikhin poked his chin into his chest. The great personage kept up his dignity in the most correct manner; throwing his head back, as though he were bowing, he uttered a few words of approbation, each prefaced by the syllable *er* and drawled through his nose; with a sort of devouring indignation he stared at Prince Kozelsky's beard, and gave the destitute general with the factory and the daughter the forefinger of his right hand. After a few minutes, in the course of which the dignitary had had time to observe twice that he was very glad he was not late for dinner, the whole company trooped into the dining-room, the bigwigs first.

There is no need to describe to the reader how they put the great man in the most important place, between the civilian general and the Marshal of nobility, a man of an independent and dignified expression of face, in perfect keeping with his starched shirt-front, his expanse of waistcoat, and his round snuff-box full of French snuff; how our host bustled about, and ran up and down, fussing and pressing the guests to eat, smiling at the great man's back in passing, and hurriedly snatching a plate of soup or a bit of steak in a corner like a schoolboy; how the butler brought in a fish more than a yard long, with a nosegay in its mouth; how the surly-looking footmen in livery sullenly plied every gentleman, now with Malaga, now dry Madeira; and how almost all the guests, particularly the more elderly ones, drank off glass after glass with an air of reluctantly resigning them-

selves to a sense of duty; and finally, how they began popping champagne bottles and proposing toasts; all that is probably only too well known to the reader. But what struck me as especially noteworthy was the anecdote told us by the great man himself amid a general delighted silence. Someone—I fancy it was the destitute general, a man familiar with modern literature—referred to the influence of women in general, and especially on young men. “Yes, yes,” chimed in the great man, “that’s true; but young men ought to be kept in strict obedience, or else, very likely, they’ll go out of their sense over every petticoat.” (A smile of child-like delight flitted over the faces of all the guests; positive gratitude shone in one gentleman’s eyes.) “For young men are idiots.” (The great man, I suppose for the sake of greater impressiveness, sometimes changed the accepted accentuation of words.) “My son, Ivan, for instance,” he went on. “The fool’s only just twenty—and all at once he comes to me and says, ‘allow me get married, Father.’ I told him he was a fool; told him he must go into the service first. Well, there was despair—tears, but with me... no nonsense.” (The words “no nonsense” the great man seemed to enunciate more with his stomach than his lips; he paused and glanced majestically at his neighbour, the general, raising his eyebrows higher than anyone could have expected. The civilian general nodded agreeably a little on one side, and with extraordinary rapidity blinked the eye turned to the great man.) “And what do you think?” the great man went on, “now he thanks me in his letters for setting him right when he was a fool. So that’s the way to act.” All the guests, of course, were in complete agreement with the speaker, and seemed quite cheered up by the pleasure and instruction they derived from him. After dinner, the whole party rose and moved into the drawing-room with a great deal of noise—decorous, however; and, as it were, licensed for the occasion. They sat down to cards.

I got through the evening somehow, and instructing my coachman to have my carriage ready at five o’clock next morning, I went to my room. But I was destined, that same day, to make the acquaintance of a remarkable man.

In consequence of the great number of guests staying in the house, no one had a bedroom to himself. In the small, greenish, damp room to which I was conducted by Alexander Mikhailich’s butler, there was already another guest, quite undressed. On seeing me, he quickly ducked under the bed-clothes, covered himself up to the nose, tossed a little on the soft feather-bed, and lay quiet, keeping a sharp look-out

from under the round frill of his cotton night-cap. I went up to the other bed (there were only two in the room), undressed, and lay down in the damp sheets. My neighbour fidgeted in bed. I wished him good-night.

Half an hour went by. In spite of all my efforts, I could not get to sleep: aimless and vague thoughts kept persistently and monotonously dragging one after another on an endless chain, like the buckets of a hydraulic machine.

"You're not asleep, I fancy?" observed my neighbour.

"No, as you see," I answered. "And you're not sleepy either, are you?"

"I'm never sleepy."

"How's that?"

"Oh! I fall asleep somehow, I don't know why. I lie in bed a long time, and finally I get to sleep."

"Why do you go to bed before you feel sleepy?"

"Why, what would you have me do?"

I made no answer to my neighbour's question.

"I wonder," he went on after a brief silence, "how it is there are no fleas here? Where should there be fleas if not here, one wonders."

"You seem to regret them," I remarked.

"No, I don't regret them; but I like everything to be consistent."

"Oho!" thought I. "What words he uses."

My neighbour was silent again.

"Would you like to make a bet with me?" he said again, rather loudly.

"What about?"

I began to be amused by him.

"Hm . . . what about? Why, about this: I'm certain you take me for a fool."

"I say," I muttered, astounded.

"For an ignoramus, for a rustic of the steppes. Confess . . ."

"I haven't the pleasure of knowing you," I responded. "What made you infer? . . ."

"Why, the sound of your voice is enough; you answer me so casually. But I'm not at all what you suppose."

"Allow me . . ."

"No, you allow me. In the first place, I speak French as well as you, and German even better; secondly, I have spent three years

abroad—in Berlin alone I lived eight months. I've studied Hegel, esteemed sir; I know Goethe by heart; add to that, I was a long while in love with a German professor's daughter, and was married at home to a consumptive lady, who was bald, but a remarkable personality. So I'm a bird of your feather; I'm not a barbarian of the steppes, as you imagine. I, too, have been prey to reflection, and there's nothing obvious about me."

I raised my head and looked with redoubled attention at the queer fellow. By the dim light of the night-lamp I could hardly distinguish his features.

"There, you're looking at me now," he went on, setting his night-cap straight, "and probably you're asking yourself, 'How is it I didn't notice him today?' I'll tell you why you didn't notice me: because I don't raise my voice; because I get behind other people, hang about doorways, and talk to no one; because, when the butler passes me with a tray, he raises his elbow to the level of my chest. And how does it all come about? From two causes: first, I'm poor; and secondly, I've grown humble. Tell the truth, you didn't notice me, did you?"

"I admit, I have not had the pleasure..."

"There, there," he interrupted me, "I knew that."

He raised himself and folded his arms; the long shadow of his cap was bent from the wall to the ceiling.

"And confess, now," he added, with a sudden sideway glance at me, "I must strike you as a queer fellow, an original, as they say, or possibly as something worse: perhaps you think I affect to be original!"

"I must repeat again that I don't know you."

He looked down an instant.

"Why have I begun talking so unexpectedly to you, a man utterly a stranger?—The Lord, the Lord only knows!" (He sighed.) "Not through the natural affinity of our souls! Both you and I are respectable people, that's to say, egoists: neither of us has the least concern with the other; isn't it so? But we are neither of us sleepy... so why not chat? I'm in the mood, and that's rare with me. I'm shy, do you see? And not shy because I'm a provincial, of no rank and poor, but because I'm a fearfully vain person. But at times, under favourable circumstances, occasions which I cannot, however, define nor foresee, my shyness vanishes completely, as at this moment, for instance. At this moment you might set me face to face with the

Grand Lama, and I'd ask him for a pinch of snuff. But perhaps you went to go to sleep?"

"Quite the contrary!" I hastened to respond. "It is a pleasure for me to talk to you."

"That is, I amuse you, you mean to say. All the better. And so, I tell you, they call me here an original; that is, they call me that when my name is casually mentioned, among other idle gossip. No one is much concerned about my fate. They mean to be sarcastic. Oh, good Lord! If they only knew... it's just what kills me, that there is absolutely nothing original in me—nothing, except such freaks, as, for instance, my conversation with you at this moment; but such freaks are not worth a brass farthing. That's the cheapest and lowest sort of originality."

He turned facing me, and waved his hands.

"Esteemed sir!" he cried, "I am of the opinion that life on earth's only worth living, as a rule, for original people; it's only they who have a right to live: '*Mon verre n'est pas grand, mais je bois dans mon verre*,' said someone. Do you see," he added in an undertone, "how well I pronounce French? What is it to one if one has a capacious brain, and understands everything, and knows a lot, and keeps pace with the age, if one has nothing of one's own? One more storehouse for hackneyed commonplaces in the world—and what good does that do to anyone? No, better be stupid even, but in one's own, one's individual flavour; that's the thing! And don't suppose that I am exacting as to that flavour. God forbid! There are no end of original people of the sort I mean; you meet them at every step; every live man is an original, but I am not to be reckoned among them."

"And yet," he went on after a brief silence, "in my youth what expectations I aroused! What a high opinion I cherished of my own person before I went abroad, and even, at first, after my return! Well, abroad I kept my ears open, held aloof from everyone, as befits a man of my stamp, who is so shrewd and perceptive, and in the end has not perceived a thing!

"An original, an original!" he hurried on, shaking his head reproachfully. "They call me an original. In reality, it turns out that there's not a man in the world less original than your humble servant. I must have been born even in imitation of someone else. Oh, dear! It seems I am living, too, in imitation of the various authors studied by me; in the sweat of my brow I live; I've studied, and fallen in love, and married, even not through my own will, as it were, but as though

fulfilling some sort of duty, or sort of fate—who's to make it out?"

He tore the night-cap off his head and flung it on the bed.

"Would you like me to tell you the story of my life?" he asked me in an abrupt voice; "or, rather, a few incidents of my life?"

"Please, do me the favour."

"Or, no I'd better tell you how I got married. You see, marriage is an important thing, the touchstone that tests the whole man: in it, as in a mirror, is reflected . . . But that sounds too hackneyed . . . If you'll allow me, I'll take a pinch of snuff."

He pulled a snuff-box from under his pillow, opened it, and began again, waving the open snuff-box about.

"Put yourself in my place, esteemed sir. Judge for yourself, what, now what possible benefit could I derive from the encyclopaedia of Hegel? What is there in common, tell me, between that encyclopaedia and Russian life? And how would you advise me to apply it to our life, and not the encyclopaedia alone, but German philosophy in general. I will say more—science itself?"

He gave a bound on the bed and muttered to himself, gnashing his teeth angrily.

"Ah, so that's how it is, is it? Then why did you go trailing off abroad? Why didn't you stay at home and study the life surrounding you on the spot? You might have found out its needs and its future, and have come to a clear comprehension of your vocation, so to say. But, upon my word," he went on, changing his tone again as though timidly justifying himself, "where is one to study what no sage has yet inscribed in any book? I should have been glad indeed to take lessons of her—of Russian life, I mean—but she's dumb, the poor dear. You must try and understand her as she is; but that's beyond my power: you must give me the inference; you must present me with a conclusion. A conclusion? Here you have a conclusion, they say: listen to our wise men of Moscow—aren't they a set of nightingales worth listening to? Yes, that's the pity of it, that they pipe away like Kursk nightingales, instead of talking as people talk. Well, I thought and thought—'Science, to be sure,' I thought, 'is everywhere the same, and truth is the same'—so I was up and off to foreign parts, to the heathens. What would you have? I was young and conceited; I didn't want, you know, to get fat before my time, though they say it's healthy. Though, indeed, if nature doesn't put flesh on your bones, you won't see much fat on your body!"

"However," he added after a moment's thought, "I promised to

tell you how I got married. Listen then. First, I must tell you that my wife is no longer living; secondly, . . . secondly, I see I must give you some account of my youth, or else you won't be able to make anything out of it . . . You don't want to go to sleep, do you?"

"No, I'm not sleepy."

"That's fine. Hark! . . . How vulgarly Mr. Kantagryukhin is snoring in the next room! I was the son of parents of small property—I say parents, because, according to tradition, I had once had a father as well as a mother. I don't remember him; he was a narrow-minded man, I've been told, with a big nose, freckles, and red hair; he used to take snuff on one nostril only; his portrait used to hang in my mother's bedroom, and very hideous he was in a red uniform with a black collar up to his ears. They used to take me to be whipped past him, and my mother used always on such occasions to point to him, saying, 'He would give you a much sounder thrashing if he were here.' You can imagine what an encouraging effect that had on me. I had no brother nor sister—that's to say, speaking accurately, I had once had a brother knocking about, with rickets in the back of his head, but he soon died. And why, one wonders, should the English disease make its way to Schigri Uyezd of Kursk Gubernia? But that's neither here nor there. My mother undertook my education with all the vigorous zeal of a country lady of the steppes: she supervised it from the solemn day of my birth till the time when my sixteenth year had come. You are following my story?"

"Yes, please go on."

"All right. Well, when I was sixteen, my mother promptly dismissed my teacher of French, a German, Filipóvich, from Nezhin Greeks. She took me to Moscow, put down my name for the university, and gave up her soul to the Almighty, leaving me in the hands of my uncle, the attorney Koltun-Babur, a bird well known not only in Schigri Uyezd. My uncle, the attorney Koltun-Babur, plundered me to the last halfpenny, after the custom of guardians. But again that's neither here nor there. I entered the university—I must do so much justice to my mother—rather well grounded; but my lack of originality was even then apparent. My childhood was in no way distinguished from the childhood of other boys; I grew up just as languidly and dully—much as if I were under a feather blanket—just as early I began repeating poetry by heart and moping under the pretence of a dreamy inclination . . . for what?—why, for the beautiful . . . and so on. In the university I followed the same road: I

promptly got into a 'circle'. Times were different then... But you don't know, perhaps, what sort of thing a students' 'circle' is? I remember Schiller said somewhere:

*Gefährlich ist's den Leu zu wecken,
Und schrecklich ist des Tigers Zahn,
Doch das schrecklichste der Schrecken—
Das ist der Mensch in seinem Wahn!*

He didn't mean that, I can assure you; he meant to say: *Das ist ein circle in der Stadt Moskau!*"

"But what do you find so awful in a circle?" I asked.

My neighbour snatched his cap and pulled it down on to his nose.

"What do I find so awful?" he cried. "Why, this: the circle is the destruction of all independent development; the circle is a hideous substitute for society, woman, life; the circle... oh, wait a bit, I'll tell you what a circle is! A circle is a slothful, dull living side by side, to which is attached the significance and the appearance of rational activity; the circle replaces conversation by debate, trains you in fruitless discussion, draws you away from solitary, useful labour, develops in you the itch for authorship—deprives you, in fact, of all freshness and virgin vigour of soul. The circle—why, it's vulgarity and boredom under the name of brotherhood and friendship, a concatenation of misunderstandings and cavillings under the pretence of openness and sympathy; in the circle—thanks to the right of every friend, at all hours and seasons, to poke his unwashed fingers into the very inmost soul of his comrade—no one has a single spot in his soul pure and undefiled; in the circle they fall down before the shallow windbag, the vain wiseacre, and the premature old man, and worship the rhymester with no poetic gift, but full of 'subtle' ideas; in the circle young lads of seventeen talk glibly and abstrusely of women and of love, while in the presence of women they are struck dumb or talk to them like a book—and what they talk to them about! The circle is the hot-bed of facile eloquence; in the circle they spy on one another like so many police officials. Oh, circle! Thou'rt not a circle, but an enchanted ring, which has been the ruin of many a decent fellow!"

"Come, you're exaggerating, allow me to observe," I broke in.

My neighbour looked at me in silence.

"Perhaps, God knows, perhaps. But, you see, there's only one

pleasure left the likes of us, and that's exaggeration—well, that was the way I spent four years in Moscow. I can't tell you, my dear sir, how quickly, how fearfully quickly, that time passed; it's positively painful and vexatious to remember. You got up in the morning and it was like sliding downhill on a sled . . . Before you can look round, you've reached the bottom; it's evening already, and already the servant is pulling helping you into your coat; you dress, and trail off to a friend, and maybe smoke you a pipe, drink glasses of weak tea and discuss German philosophy, love, the eternal sunshine of the spirit, and other far-fetched topics. But even there I met original, independent people: however they might coerce themselves and warp themselves out of shape, still nature asserted itself; I alone, poor wretch, moulded myself like soft wax, and my pitiful little nature never offend the faintest resistance! Meantime I had reached my twenty-first year. I came into possession of my inheritance, or, more correctly speaking, that part of my inheritance which my guardian had thought fit to leave me, gave a freed house-serf Vassily Kudryashev a warrant to superintend all my patrimony, and went abroad to Berlin. I was abroad, as I have already had the pleasure of telling you, three years. Well. There, too, I remained the same unoriginal creature. In the first place, I need not say that of Europe, of European life, I really learnt nothing. I listened to German professors and read German books in their birthplace: that was all the difference. I led as solitary a life as any monk; I made friends with retired lieutenants, weighed down, like myself, by a thirst for knowledge but always dull of comprehension, and denied the gift of words; I associated with slow-witted families from Penza and other agricultural provinces, hung about *cafés*, read the papers, in the evening went to the theatre. With the natives I had very little contact; I talked to them with constraint, and never had one of them at my own place, except two or three importunate fellows of Jewish extraction, who were constantly dropping in to borrow money—thanks to *der Russe's* gullibility. A strange freak of chance brought me at last to the house of one of my professors. It was like this: I came to him to enter my name for a course of lectures, and he, all of a sudden, invited me to an evening party at his house. This professor had two daughters, of twenty-seven, such stumpy little things—God bless them!—with such majestic noses, frizzed curls and pale-blue eyes, and red hands with white nails. One was called Linchen and the other Minchen. I began to go to the professor's. I ought to tell you that the professor was

not exactly stupid, but seemed, as it were, dazed; from his professorial desk he spoke fairly consecutively, but at home he lisped, and always had his spectacles on his forehead—he was a very learned man, though. Well, suddenly it seemed to me that I was in love with Linchen, and for six whole months this impression remained. I talked to her, it's true, very little—mostly I looked at her; but I used to read various touching passages aloud to her, to press her hand on the sly, and to dream beside her in the evenings, gazing persistently at the moon, or else simply up aloft. Besides, she made such delicious coffee! One asks oneself—what more could one desire? Only one thing troubled me: at the very moments of ineffable bliss, as it's called, I always had a sort of sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, and a cold shudder ran down my back. At last I could not stand such happiness and ran away. Two whole years after that I was abroad; I went to Italy, stood before the Transfiguration in Rome, and before the Venus in Florence, and suddenly fell into exaggerated raptures, as though an attack of delirium had come upon me; in the evenings I wrote verses, began a diary; in fact, there, too, I behaved exactly like everyone else. And just mark how easy it is to be original! I take no interest, for instance, in painting and sculpture. If I simply said so aloud . . . no, it was impossible! I must needs take a cicerone and run to gaze at the frescoes."

He looked down again, and again pulled off his night-cap.

"Well, I came back to my own country at last," he went on in a weary voice. "I went to Moscow. In Moscow an amazing transformation took place in me. Abroad I was mostly silent, but now suddenly I began to talk with unexpected glibness, and at the same time I conceived all sorts of ideas of myself. There were kindly disposed persons to be found, to whom I seemed all but a genius; ladies listened sympathetically to my diatribes; but I was not able to keep on the summit of my glory. One fine morning a nasty rumour sprang up about me (who had originated it, I don't know; it must have been some old maid of the male sex—there are any number of such old maids in Moscow); it sprang up and began to throw off outshoots and tendrils like a strawberry plant. I was entangled, tried to get out of it, to break through its clinging toils—and failed. I went away. Well, in that, too, I showed that I was an absurd person; I ought to have calmly waited for the storm to blow over, just as one waits for the end of nettle-rash, and the same kindly disposed persons would have opened their arms to me again, the same ladies would have smiled

approvingly again at my remarks. But there you are—I'm not an original person. Scruples, if you please, had come awake in me; I became ashamed to do nothing but talk, talk without ceasing, yesterday in Arbat, today in Truba, tomorrow in Sivtsev-Vrazhek, and all about the same thing. But if that is what people want of me? Look at the really successful protagonists in that line; they never have a qualm; on the contrary, it's all they need; some will keep their tongues wagging twenty years together, and always in one direction. That's what comes of self-confidence and conceit! I, too, had conceit—indeed, even now it's not been altogether stifled. But what was wrong was that, not being an original person, I stopped midway: nature ought to have given me far more conceit or none at all. But at first I took it all to heart terribly; moreover, my stay abroad had utterly drained my funds, and I was not disposed to marry a merchant's daughter, young, but flabby as a jelly; so I retired to my country place. I fancy," added my neighbour, with another sideways glance at me, "I may pass over in silence the first impressions of country life, references to the beauty of nature, the gentle charm of solitude, etc."

"You may, indeed," I assented.

"All the more," he continued, "as all that is nonsense; at least, as far as I'm concerned. I was as bored in the country as a locked-up puppy, though I will own that on my journey home, when I passed through the familiar birch wood in spring for the first time, my head was in a whirl and my heart beat with a vague, sweet expectation. But these vague expectations, as you're well aware, never come to pass; on the other hand, very different things do come to pass, which you don't at all expect, such as cattle disease, tax arrears, sales by auction, and so on, and so on. I managed to make shift from day to day with the aid of my steward, Yakov, who replaced the former superintendent, and turned out in the course of time to be as great, if not a greater, robber and over and above that poisoned my existence by the smell of his tarred boots; suddenly one day I remembered a family I knew in the neighbourhood, consisting of the widow of a retired colonel and her two daughters, ordered out my droshky, and set off to see them. That day must always be a memorable one for me—six months later I was married to the retired colonel's second daughter..."

The speaker dropped his head, and lifted his hands to heaven.

"And now," he went on warmly, "I couldn't bear to give you an

unfavourable opinion of my late wife. Heaven forbid! She was the most generous, sweetest creature, a loving nature capable of any sacrifice, though I must between ourselves confess that if I had not had the misfortune to lose her, I should probably not be in a position to be talking to you today, since the beam is still there in my barn, from which I repeatedly made up my mind to hang myself! . . .”

“Some pears,” he began again after a brief pause, “need to lie in an underground cellar for a time, to come, as they say, to their real flavour; my wife, it seems, belonged to a similar order of nature’s works. It’s only now that I do her complete justice. It’s only now, for instance, that memories of some evenings I spent with her before marriage no longer awaken the slightest bitterness, but instead move me almost to tears. They were not rich people; their house was very old-fashioned and built of wood, but comfortable; it stood on a hill between an overgrown courtyard and a garden run wild. At the foot of the hill ran a river, which could just be seen through the thick leaves. A wide terrace led from the house to the garden; before the terrace was a long flower-bed covered with roses; at each end of the flower-bed grew two acacias, which had been trained to grow into the shape of a screw by the late colonel. A little farther, in the very midst of a thicket of neglected and overgrown raspberries, stood an arbour, prettily painted within, but so old and tumble-down outside that it was frightening to look at it. A glass door led from the terrace into the drawing-room; in the drawing-room this was what met the eye of the inquisitive spectator: stoves of Dutch tiles in the various corners, a squeaky piano to the right, piled with manuscript music, a sofa upholstered in faded blue damask with a whitish pattern, a round table, two cabinets with knick-knacks of the Catherine period made of porcelain and beads; on the wall the well-known picture of a flaxen-haired maiden with a dove on her breast and eyes turned upwards; on the table a vase of fresh roses. You see how minutely I describe it. In that drawing-room, on that terrace, was played out all the tragi-comedy of my love. The colonel’s wife herself was an ill-natured old dame, whose voice was always hoarse with spite—a petty, snappish creature. Of the daughters, one, Vera, did not differ in any respect from the common run of young ladies of the provinces; the other, Sophia, I fell in love with. The two sisters had another little room, too, their common bedroom, with two innocent little wooden bedsteads, yellowish albums, mignonette, portraits of friends sketched in pencil rather badly (among them was one gentleman with

an exceptionally vigorous expression of face and a still more vigorous signature, who had in his youth raised disproportionate expectations, but had come, like all of us, to nothing), with busts of Goethe and Schiller, German books, dried wreaths, and other objects, kept as souvenirs. But that room I entered but rarely and reluctantly; I felt stifled there somehow. Another thing—strange to say, I liked Sophia best of all when I was sitting with my back to her, or still more, perhaps, when I was thinking or dreaming about her in the evening on the terrace. At such times I used to gaze at the sunset, at the trees, at the tiny leaves, already in darkness, but standing out sharply against the rosy sky; in the drawing-room Sophia sat at the piano playing over and over again some favourite, passionately pathetic phrase from Beethoven; the ill-natured old lady snored peacefully, sitting on the sofa; in the dining-room, which was flooded by a glow of lurid light, Vera was bustling about getting tea; the samovar hissed merrily as though it were pleased at something; the cracknels snapped with a pleasant crispness, and the spoons tinkled against the cups; the canary, which trilled mercilessly all day, was suddenly still, and only chirruped from time to time, as though asking something; from a light transparent cloud there fell a few passing drops of rain . . . And I would sit, listen, and look, and my heart would expand, and again it seemed to me that I was in love. Well, under the influence of such an evening, I one day asked the old lady for her daughter's hand, and two months later I was married. It seemed to me that I loved her . . . By now, indeed, it's time I should know, but, by God, even now I don't know whether I loved Sophia. She was a sweet creature, clever, silent, and warm-hearted, but God only knows from what cause, whether from living too long in the country, or for some other reason, there was at the bottom of her soul (if only there is a bottom to the soul) a secret wound, or, to put it better, a little open sore which nothing could heal, to which neither she nor I could give a name. Of the existence of this sore, of course, I only guessed after marriage. The struggles I had over it . . . nothing availed! When I was a child I had a little bird, which had once been caught by the cat in its claws; it was saved and tended, but the poor bird never got right; it moped, it pined, it ceased to sing. It ended by a rat getting into its open cage one night and biting off its beak, after which it made up its mind at last to die. I don't know what cat had caught my wife in its claws, but she, too, moped and pined just like my unlucky bird. Sometimes she obviously made an effort to shake herself free, to

rejoice in the open air and sunshine; she would try, and shrink up into herself again. And, you know, she loved me; how many times did she assure me that she had nothing left to wish for?—oof? Damm my soul! And the light was fading out of her eyes all the while. I wondered whether there hadn't been something in her past. I made investigations: there was nothing. Well, you may form your own judgement; an original man would have shrugged his shoulders and heaved a sigh or two, perhaps, and would have proceeded to live his own life; but I, not being an original creature, began to contemplate a beam and halter. My wife was so thoroughly permeated by all the habits of an old maid—Beethoven, evening walks, mignonette, corresponding with her friends, albums, et cetera—that she never could accustom herself to any other mode of life, especially to the life of the mistress of a house; and yet it seemed absurd for a married woman to be pining in vague melancholy and singing in the evening: 'Waken her not at the dawn!'

"Well, we lived in this bliss for three years; in the fourth, Sophia died in her first confinement, and, strange to say, I had felt, beforehand as it were, that she would not be capable of giving me a daughter or a son—of giving the earth a new inhabitant. I remember how they buried her. It was in the spring. Our parish church is small and old, the iconostasis is blackened, the walls bare, the brick floor worn into hollows in parts; there is a big, old-fashioned ikon in each half of the choir. They brought in the coffin, placed it in the middle before the holy gates, covered it with a faded pall, set three candlesticks about it. The service commenced. A decrepit chanter, with a little shock of hair behind, girded low down with a green belt, was mournfully mumbling before a reading-desk; a priest, also an old man, with a kindly purblind face, in a lilac cassock with a yellow pattern on it, served the mass for himself and the chanter. In the open windows the fresh young leaves were stirring and whispering on the birches, and the smell of the grass rose from the churchyard outside; the red flame of the wax candles paled in the bright light of the spring day; the sparrows were twittering all over the church, and every now and then there came the ringing cry of a swallow which had flown in under the cupola. In the golden motes of the sunbeams the brown heads of the few peasants kept rising and dropping down again as they prayed earnestly for their dead mistress; the smoke issued from the holes of the censer in a thin bluish stream. I looked at the dead face of my wife . . . My God! Even death—death itself—had not set her

free, had not healed her wound: the same sickly, timid, dumb look, as though, even in her coffin, she was uncomfortable. My heart was pained. A kind, kind creature she was, and she did well for herself to die!"

The speaker's cheeks flushed, and his eyes grew dim. "When at last," he began again, "I emerged from the deep depression which overwhelmed me after my wife's death, I resolved to devote myself, as it is called, to work. I went into a government office in the gubernia city; but in the great apartments of the government institution my head ached, and my eyesight, too, began to fail; other considerations came in... I retired. I had thought of going on a visit to Moscow, but, in the first place, I hadn't the money, and secondly... I've told you already: I'm resigned. This resignation came upon me both suddenly and not suddenly. In spirit I had long ago resigned myself, but my head still rebelled. I ascribed my humble temper and ideas to the influence of country life and unhappiness. On the other hand, I had long observed that all my neighbours, young and old alike, who had been frightened at first by my learning, my residence abroad, and my other advantages of education, had not only had time to get completely used to me, but had even begun to treat me half-rudely, half-contemptuously, did not listen to my observations, and, in talking to me, no longer showed any difference. I forgot to tell you, too, that during the first year after my marriage, I had tried to launch into literature, and even sent a thing to a journal—a story, if I'm not mistaken; but in a little time I received a polite letter from the editor, in which, among other things, I was told that he could not deny I had intelligence, but he was obliged to say I had no talent, and talent alone was what was needed in literature. To add to this, it came to my knowledge that a young man, on a visit from Moscow—a most good-natured youth, too—had referred to me at an evening party at the governor's as a spent person, worthless and of no account. But my half-wilful blindness still persisted: I was unwilling to give myself a slap in the face, you know; at last, one fine morning, my eyes were opened. This was how it happened. The district captain of police came to see me with the object of calling my attention to a tumble-down bridle on my property, which I had absolutely no money to repair. After consuming a glass of vodka and a snack of smoked fish, this condescending guardian of order reproached me in a paternal way for my heedlessness, sympathising, however, with my position, and only advising me to order my peasants to patch up the bridge

with some rubbish; then he lighted a pipe, and began talking of the coming elections. A candidate for the honourable post of marshal of the nobility was at that time one Orbassanov, a noisy, shallow fellow, who took bribes into the bargain. Besides, he was not distinguished either for wealth or for family. I expressed my opinion with regard to him, and rather casually too: I regarded Mr. Orbassanov, I must own, as a person far beneath me. The police captain looked at me, patted me amicably on the shoulder, and said good-naturedly, 'Come, come, Vassily Vassilyich, it's not for you and me to criticise men like him—who are we? Let the shoe-maker stick to his last.' 'But, upon my word,' I retorted with annoyance, 'whatever difference is there between me and Mr. Orbassanov?' The police captain took his pipe out of his mouth, opened his eyes wide, and fairly roared. 'Well, you're a droll fellow,' he observed at last, while the tears ran down his cheeks. 'What a laugh!... Ah! Can you imagine it!' And till his departure he never ceased jeering at me, now and then giving me a poke in the ribs with his elbow, and addressing me by my Christian name. He went away at last. This was enough: it was the last drop, and my cup was overflowing. I paced several times up and down the room, stood still before the mirror and gazed a long, long while at my embarrassed countenance, and deliberately putting out my tongue, I shook my head with a bitter smile. The scales fell from my eyes: I saw clearly, more clearly than I saw my face in the glass, what a shallow, insignificant, worthless, unoriginal person I was!"

He paused.

"In one of Voltaire's tragedies," he went on wearily, "there is some worthy who rejoices that he has reached the furthest limit of unhappiness. Though there is nothing tragic in my fate, I will admit I have experienced something of that sort. I have known the bitter transports of cold despair; I have felt how sweet it is, lying in bed, to curse deliberately for a whole morning the hour and day of my birth. I could not resign myself all at once. And indeed, think of it yourself: I was kept by impecuniosity in the country, which I hated; I was not fitted for managing my land, nor for the public service, nor for literature, nor anything; my neighbours I didn't care for, and books I loathed; as for the mawkish and morbidly sentimental young ladies who shake their curls and feverishly harp on the word 'life', I had ceased to have any attraction for them ever since I gave up ranting and gushing; complete solitude I could not face... I began—what do you suppose?—I began visiting my neighbours. As though drunk with self-

contempt, I purposely exposed myself to all sorts of petty slights. I was missed over in serving at table; I was met with supercilious coldness, and at last was not noticed at all; I was not even allowed to take part in general conversation, and from my corner I would purposely play up to some stupid windbag who in those days at Moscow would have ecstatically licked the dust off my feet and kissed the hem of my cloak. I did not even allow myself to believe that I was enjoying the bitter satisfaction of irony. What sort of irony, indeed, can a man enjoy in solitude? Well, so I have behaved for several years, and so I behave now."

"Really, this is beyond everything," grumbled the sleepy voice of Mr. Kantagryukhin from the next room. "What fool is it talking away all night?"

The speaker promptly ducked under the bed clothes and, peeping out timidly, held up his finger to me warningly.

"Sh—sh—!" he whispered; and, as though bowing apologetically in the direction of Kantagryukhin's voice, he said respectfully, "Certainly, sir, I beg your pardon, sir . . . It's permissible for him to sleep; he ought to sleep," he went on again in a whisper, "he must recruit his energies—well, if only to eat his dinner with the same relish tomorrow. We have no right to disturb him. Besides, I think I've told you all I wanted to; probably you're sleepy, too. I wish you good-night."

He turned away with feverish rapidity and buried his head in the pillow.

"May I at least know," I asked, "with whom I have had the pleasure . . ."

He raised his head quickly.

"No, for mercy's sake," he cut me short, "don't inquire my name either of me or of others. Let me remain to you an unknown being, a Vassily Vassilyich, crushed by fate. Besides, as an unoriginal person. I don't deserve an individual name. But if you really want to give me some title, call me . . . call me the Hamlet of Schigri Uyezd. There are many such Hamlets in every uyezd, but perhaps you haven't come across others. After which, good-bye."

He buried himself again under his feather blanket, and the next morning, when they came to wake me, he was no longer in the room. He had left before daylight.

CHERTOPKHANOV AND NEDOPYUSKIN

One hot summer day I was coming home from hunting in a light cart; Ermolai sat beside me dozing. The sleeping dogs were jolted up and down like lifeless bodies under our feet. The coachman kept flicking gadflies off the horses with his whip. The white dust rose in a light cloud behind the cart. We drove in between bushes. The road here was full of ruts, and the wheels began catching in the twigs. Ermolai started up and looked round. "Hullo!" he said. "There ought to be grouse here. Let's get out." We stopped and went into the thicket. My dog hit upon a covey. I took a shot and was beginning to reload, when suddenly there was a loud crackling behind me, and a man on horseback rode out towards me, pushing the bushes apart with his hands. "Sir... permit me to ask," he began in a haughty voice, "by what right you are—shooting here, sir?" the stranger spoke extraordinarily quickly, jerkily and in nasal accents. I looked at his face; never in my life have I seen anything like it. Picture to yourselves, gentle readers, a little flaxen-haired man, with a little turn-up red nose and long red moustaches. A pointed Persian cap with a crimson cloth crown covered his forehead right down to his eyebrows. He was dressed in a shabby yellow Caucasian overcoat, with black velveteen cartridge pockets on the breast, and tarnished silver braid on all the seams; over his shoulder was slung a horn; in his sash was pushed a dagger. A raw-boned, hook-nosed chestnut horse shambled unsteadily under his weight; two lean, crook-legged borzois were in evidence under foot. The face, the glance, the voice, every movement, the whole being of the stranger was expressive of a wild daring and an unbounded, stupendous pride; his pale-blue glassy eyes strayed about with sideways squint like a drunkard's; he flung back his head, puffed out his cheeks, snorted and quivered all over, as though bursting with dignity—for all the world like a turkey-cock. He repeated his question.

"I didn't know it was forbidden to shoot here," I replied.

"You are on my land, sir," he continued.

"With your permission, I will go off it."

"But permit me to ask," he rejoined, "is it a nobleman I have the honour of addressing?"

I mentioned my name.

"In that case, oblige me by hunting here. I am a nobleman myself, and am very pleased to do any service to a nobleman . . . And my name is Pantelei Chertopkhanov." He bowed, hallooed, gave his horse a lash on the neck; the horse shook its head, reared, shied, and trampled on a dog's paw. The dog gave a piercing squeal. Chertopkhanov boiled over with rage; foaming at the mouth, he struck the horse with his fist on the head between the ears, leaped to the ground quicker than lightning, looked at the dog's paw, spat on the wound, gave it a kick in the ribs to stop its whining, caught on to the horse's withers, and put his foot in the stirrup. The horse flung up its head, and with its tail in the air edged away into the bushes; he followed it, hopping on one leg; he got into the saddle at last, however, flourished his whip in a sort of frenzy, blew his horn, and galloped off. Before I recovered from the unexpected appearance of Chertopkhanov, suddenly, almost without any noise, there rode out of the bushes a small fat man of forty on a little black nag. He stopped, took off his green leather cap, and in a thin, subdued voice asked me whether I hadn't seen a horseman riding a chestnut? I answered that I had.

"Which way did the gentleman go?" he went on in the same voice, without putting on his cap.

"Over there."

"I humbly thank you, sir."

He made a kissing sound with his lips to urge the horse on, swung his legs against its sides, and fell into a jog-trot in the direction indicated. I looked after him till his peaked cap was hidden behind the branches. This second stranger was not in the least like his predecessor in exterior. His face, plump and round as a ball, expressed bashfulness, good-nature, and humble meekness; his nose, also plump and round and streaked with blue veins, betokened a sensualist. Above his forehead there was not a single hair left, some thin brown tufts stuck out behind; there was an ingratiating twinkle in his little eyes, set in long slits, and a sweet smile on his red, full lips. He had on a coat with a stand-up collar and brass buttons, very

worn but clean; his cloth trousers were hitched up high, his fat calves were visible above the yellow tops of his boots.

"Who's that?" I inquired of Ermolai.

"That? Nedopyuskin, Tikhon Ivanich. He lives at Chertopkhanov's."

"Why, is he a poor man?"

"He's not rich; but, to be sure, Chertopkhanov's not got a brass farthing either."

"Then why does he live with him?"

"Oh, they are friends. One's never seen without the other. What a pair!"

We got out of the bushes; suddenly two hounds started baying close to us, and a big hare bounded through the oats, which were fairly high by now. The dogs, hounds and borzois, leaped out of the thicket after him, and after the dogs flew out Chertopkhanov himself. He did not shout, nor urge the dogs on, nor halloo; he was breathless and gasping; broken, senseless sounds were jerked out of his gaping mouth now and then; he dashed on, his eyes starting out of his head, and furiously lashed at his luckless horse with the whip. The borzois were gaining on the hare... it squatted for a moment, doubled sharply back, and darted past Ermolai into the bushes. The borzois rushed in pursuit. "Lo-ok out! Lo-ok out!" the exhausted horseman articulated with an effort, in a sort of stutter, "lo-ok out, friend!" Ermolai shot... the wounded hare rolled head over heels on the smooth dry grass, leaped into the air, and squealed piteously in the teeth of a worrying dog. The hounds crowded about him.

Like an arrow, Chertopkhanov flew off his horse, jerked out his dagger, ran, legs far apart, towards the dogs, with furious imprecations snatched the mangled hare from them, and, creasing up his whole face, buried the dagger in its throat up to the very hilt... buried it, and began hallooing. Tikhon Ivanich made his appearance on the edge of the thicket. "Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!" vociferated Chertopkhanov a second time. "Ho-ho-ho-ho," his companion repeated placidly.

"But really, you know, one ought not to hunt in summer," I observed to Chertopkhanov, pointing to the trampled-down oats.

"It's my field," answered Chertopkhanov, gasping.

He cut off the hare's paws, hung it on to his saddle, and flung the paws to the dogs.

"I owe you a charge, my friend, by the rules of hunting," he said,

addressing Ermolai. "And you, dear sir," he added in the same jerky, abrupt voice, "my thanks."

He mounted his horse.

"Pe-ermit me to ask . . . I've forgotten your name and your patronymic."

Again I told him my name.

"Delighted to make your acquaintance. When you have an opportunity, be sure to come and see me. But where is that Fomka, Tikhon Ivanich?" he went on with heat. "The hare was run down without him."

"His horse died under him," replied Tikhon Ivanich with a smile.

"Died! Orbassan died?" He gave a whistle. "Where is he?"

"Over there, behind the copse."

Chertopkhanov struck his horse on the muzzle with his whip, and galloped off at a break-neck pace. Tikhon Ivanich bowed to me twice, once for himself and once for his companion, and again set off at a trot into the bushes.

These two gentlemen aroused my curiosity keenly. What could unite two creatures so different in the bonds of an inseparable friendship? I began to make inquiries. This is what I learned.

Pantelei Eremeich Chertopkhanov had the reputation in the neighbourhood of a dangerous, crack-brained fellow, haughty and quarrelsome in the extreme. He had served a very short time in the army, and had retired from the service through "difficulties" with his superiors, in the rank of junior lieutenant, then which there is no lower one. He came of an old family, once rich; his forefathers lived sumptuously, after the manner of the steppes—that is, they welcomed all, invited or uninvited, fed them to repletion, gave out oats by the quarter to their guests' coachmen for their troikas, kept musicians, singers, jesters, and dogs; on festive days regaled their people with spirits and beer, drove to Moscow in the winter with their own horses, in heavy old coaches, and sometimes were for whole months without a farthing, living on home-grown produce. The estate came into Pantelei Eremeich's father's hands in a crippled condition; he, in his turn, "played ducks and drakes" with it, and when he died, left his sole heir, Pantelei, the small mortgaged village of Bessonovo, with thirty-five souls of the male, and seventy-six of the female sex, and thirty-eight acres and a half of useless land on Kolobrodova heath, no title-deed for which could be found among the deceased's papers. The deceased had, it must be confessed, ruined himself in a very

strange way: "provident management" had been his destruction. According to his notions, a nobleman ought not to depend on merchants, townsmen, and "brigands" of that sort, as he called them; he set up all possible trades and crafts on his estate. "It's both seemlier and cheaper," he used to say: "It's provident management!" He never relinquished this fatal idea to the end of his days; indeed, it was his ruin. But, then, what diversion he derived from it! He never denied himself the satisfaction of a single whim. Among his freaks, he once built, after his own plan, so immense a family coach that, in spite of the united efforts of the peasants' horses, drawn together from the whole village, as well as their owners, it came to grief and fell to pieces on the first hillside. Eremai Lukich (the name of Pantelei's father was Eremai Lukich) ordered a memorial to be put up on the hillside, but was not, however, at all abashed over the affair. He conceived the happy thought, too, of building a church—by himself, of course—without the assistance of an architect. He burnt a whole forest in making the bricks, laid an immense foundation, as though for a cathedral, raised the walls, and began putting on the cupola; the cupola fell down. He tried again—the cupola again broke down; he tried the third time—the cupola fell to pieces a third time. Good Eremai Lukich grew thoughtful; there was something uncanny about it, he reflected... some accursed witchcraft must have had a hand in it... and at once he gave orders to flog all the old women in the village. They flogged the old women; but they didn't get the cupola on, for all that. He began reconstructing the peasants' huts on a new plan, and all on a system of "provident management"; he set them three homesteads together in a triangle, and in the middle stuck up a post with a painted bird-house and a flag. Every day he invented some new project; at one time he was making soup of burdocks, at another cutting his horses' tails off to make caps for his servants; at yet another, proposing to substitute nettles for flax, to feed pigs on mushrooms... However, economic innovation was not his sole hobby; he also concerned himself with the welfare of his peasants. He had once read in the *Moscow Gazette* an article by a Kharkov landowner, Khryak-Khrupyorsky, on the importance of morality to the well-being of the peasant, and the next day he gave forth a decree to all his peasants to learn off the Kharkov landowner's article by heart at once. The peasants learnt the article; the master asked them whether they understood what was said in it. The bailiff replied—that to be sure they understood it! About the same time he ordered all his subjects,

with a view to the maintenance of order and provident management, to be numbered, and each to have his number sewn on his collar. On meeting the master, each was to shout, "Number so-and-so is here!" and the master would answer affably: "Go on, God be with you."

In spite, however, of order and provident management, Eremai Lukich gradually got onto a very difficult position; he began at first to mortgage his villages, and then was brought to the sale of them; the last ancestral home, the village with the unfinished church, was sold at last for arrears to the Crown, luckily not in the lifetime of Eremai Lukich—he could never have supported such a blow—but a fortnight after his death. He succeeded in dying at home in his own bed, surrounded by his own people, and under the care of his own doctor; but nothing was left to poor Pantelei but Bessonovo.

Pantelei heard of his father's illness while he was still in the army, in the very thick of the "difficulties" mentioned above. He was only just eighteen. From his earliest childhood he had not left his father's house, and under the guidance of his mother, a very good-natured but perfectly stupid woman, Vassilisa Vassilyevna, he grew up spoilt and conceited. She undertook his education alone; Eremai Lukich, buried in his economical projects, had no time to spare for him. It is true, he once punished his son with his own hand for mispronouncing a letter of the alphabet; but Eremai Lukich had received a cruel blow that day and was secretly lamenting the death of his best dog which had been crushed by a tree. Vassilisa Vassilyevna's efforts in regard to Pantelei's education did not, however, get beyond one terrific exertion; in the sweat of her brow she engaged him a tutor, one Birkopf, a retired Alsatian soldier, and to the day of her death she trembled like a leaf before him. "Oh," she thought, "if he leaves us I'm lost! Where could I turn? Where could I find another teacher? Why, what it cost me to entice this one away from our neighbour!" And Birkopf, like a shrewd man, promptly took advantage of his unique position; he drank like a fish, and slept from morning till night. On the completion of his "course of study", Pantelei entered the army. Vassilisa Vassilyevna was no more; she had died six months before that important event, of fright: she had had a dream of a white figure riding on a bear with a sign on its breast: "Antichrist." Eremai Lukich soon followed his better half.

At the first news of his illness, Pantelei galloped home at break-neck speed, but he did not find his father alive. Imagine the amazement of the dutiful son when he found himself, utterly unexpectedly,

transformed from a rich heir to a poor man! Few men are capable of bearing so sharp a reverse well. Pantelei was embittered, his temper soured. From an honest, generous, good-natured fellow, though spoilt and hot-tempered, he became haughty and quarrelsome; he gave up associating with the neighbours—he was too proud to visit the rich, and he disdained the poor—and behaved with unheard-of arrogance to everyone, even to the established authorities. "I am of the ancient hereditary nobility," he would say. Once he had been on the point of shooting the police commissioner for coming into the room with his cap on his head. Of course the authorities, for their part, reciprocated, and took every opportunity to make him smart; but still, they were rather afraid of him, because he had a violent temper, and would propose a duel with knives at the second word. At the slightest retort Chertopkhanov's eyes blazed, his voice broke. "Ah, er-er-er," he stammered, "damn my soul!" . . . and nothing could stop him. And, moreover, he was a man of stainless character, who had never had a hand in anything the least shady. No one, of course, visited him . . . and with all this he was a good-hearted, even a great-hearted man in his own way; acts of injustice, of oppression, he would not brook; he stood up for his own peasants like a rock. "What?" he would say, with a violent blow on his own head. "Harm my people, mine? My name's not Chertopkhanov, if I . . ."

Tikhon Ivanich Nedopyuskin could not, like Pantelei Ereimeich, pride himself on his origins. His father came of the freeholder class, and only by dint of forty years of service attained the rank of a noble. Mr. Nedopyuskin, the father, belonged to the number of those people who are pursued by misfortune with an obduracy akin to personal hatred. For sixty years, from his very birth to his very death, the poor man was struggling with all the hardships, calamities, and privations, incidental to people of small means; he struggled desperately to make both ends meet, never having enough food and sleep—cringing, worrying, wearing himself to exhaustion, fretting over every kopeck; he was demoted in the service, through no fault of his own, and, finally died in either a garret or a cellar, in the unsuccessful struggle to gain for himself or his children a crust of dry bread. Fate had hunted him down like a hare.

He was a good-natured and honest man, though he did take bribes commensurate with his office—from a ten-kopeck piece up to a couple of rubles inclusive. Nedopyuskin had a wife, thin and consumptive; he had children, too; luckily they all died young except

Tikhon and a daughter, Mitrodora, nicknamed "the merchants' belle", who, after many painful and ludicrous adventures, was married to a retired attorney. Mr. Nedopyuskin Sr. had succeeded before his death in getting Tikhon a place as supernumerary clerk in some office; but directly after his father's death Tikhon resigned his situation. Their perpetual anxieties, their heart-rending struggle against cold and hunger, his mother's careworn depression, his father's fretful despair, the coarse aggressiveness of landladies and shopkeepers—all the unending daily suffering of their life had developed an exaggerated timidity in Tikhon: at the mere sight of his chief he was faint and trembling like a captured bird. He threw up his office. Nature, in her indifference, or perhaps her irony, implants in people all sorts of faculties and tendencies utterly inconsistent with their means and their position in society: with her characteristic solicitude she had moulded of Tikhon, the son of a poor clerk, a sensuous, indolent, soft, impressionable creature—a creature fitted exclusively for enjoyment, gifted with an excessively delicate sense of smell and of taste... she had moulded him, finished him off most carefully, and set her creation to struggle up on sour cabbage and putrid fish! And, behold! The creation did struggle up somehow, and began what is called "life". Then the fun began. Fate, which had so ruthlessly tormented Nedopyuskin the father, now disported herself with the son, too; she had a taste for them, one must suppose. But she treated Tikhon on a different plan: she did not torture him; she played with him. She did not once drive him to desperation, she did not set him to suffer the degrading agonies of hunger, but she led him a dance through the whole of Russia from one end to the other, from one degrading and ludicrous position to another; at one time Fate made him "major-domo" to a snappish, choleric Lady Bountiful, at another a humble parasite on a wealthy skinflint merchant, then a private secretary to a goggle-eyed gentleman, with his hair cut in the English style, then she promoted him to the post of something between butler and buffoon to a dog-fancier and a bully... In short, Fate made poor Tikhon to drink drop by drop to the dregs the bitter poisoned cup of a dependent existence. He had been, in his time, the sport of the dull malignity and the boorish pranks of slothful masters. How often, alone in his room, released at last after a mob of visitors had glutted their taste for horseplay at his expense, he had vowed, aflame with humiliation, chill tears of despair in his eyes, that he would run away in secret, would try his luck in the town, would find

himself some little place as clerk, or die once for all of hunger in the street! But, in the first place, God had not given him strength of character; secondly, his timidity unhinged him; and thirdly, how could he get himself a place? Whom could he ask? "They'll never give it me," the luckless wretch would murmur, tossing wearily in his bed, "they'll never give it me!" And the next day he would take up the same degrading life again. His position was the more painful that, with all her care, nature had not troubled to give him the smallest share of the gifts and qualifications without which the trade of a buffoon is almost impossible. He was not equal, for instance, to dancing till he dropped, in a bearskin coat turned inside out, nor making jokes and cutting capers in the immediate vicinity of cracking whips; if he was turned out the nude into a temperature of twenty degrees below freezing, as often as not, he caught cold; his stomach could not digest brandy mixed with ink and other filth, nor minced toadstools in vinegar. There is no knowing what would have become of Tikhon if the last of his patrons, a contractor who had made his fortune, had not taken it into his head in a merry hour to inscribe in his will: "And to Zyozya (Tikhon, to wit) Nedopyuskin, I leave in perpetual possession, to him and his heirs, the village of Besselendeyevka, lawfully acquired by me, with all its lands." A few days later this patron was smitten with a fit of apoplexy while gorging on sturgeon soup. A great commotion followed; the officials came and put seals on the property.

The relations arrived; the will was opened and read; and they called for Nedopyuskin; Nedopyuskin made his appearance. The greater number of the party knew the nature of Tikhon Ivanich's duties in his patron's household; he was greeted with deafening shouts and ironical congratulations. "The landlord; here is the new landlord!" shouted the other heirs. "Well, really this," put in one, a noted wit and humorist, "well, really this, one may say . . . this positively is . . . really what one may call . . . an heir!" and they all went off into shrieks. For a long while Nedopyuskin could not believe in his good fortune. They showed him the will: he flushed, shut his eyes, waved his arms and burst into tears. The laughter of the party became a deep unanimous roar. The village of Besselendeyevka consisted of only twenty-two serfs, no one regretted its loss keenly; so why not get some fun out of it? Then a heir from St. Petersburg, an important-looking man, with a Greek nose and a majestic expression of face, Rostislav Adamich Stoppel, went so far as to move up to Nedopyu-

skin and look haughtily at him over his shoulder. "So far as I can gather, esteemed sir," he observed with contemptuous carelessness, "you enjoyed your position in the household of our respected Fyodor Fyodorich owing to your obliging readiness to wait on his diversions?" The gentleman from Petersburg expressed himself in a style insufferably refined, smart, and correct. Nedopyuskin, in his agitation and confusion, had not taken in the unknown gentleman's words, but the other were all quiet at once; the wit smiled condescendingly. Mr. Stoppel rubbed his hands and repeated his question. Nedopyuskin raised his eyes in bewilderment and opened his mouth. Rostislav Adamich screwed up his face up sarcastically.

"I congratulate you, my dear sir, I congratulate you," he went on. "It's true, one may say, not everyone would have consented to gain his daily bread in such a fashion; but *de gustibus non est disputandum*, that is, everyone to his taste... Eh?"

Someone at the back uttered a curt, decorous shriek of admiration and delight.

"Tell us," pursued Mr. Stoppel, much encouraged by the smiles of the whole party, "to what special talent are you indebted for your good fortune? No, don't be bashful, tell us; we're all here, so to speak, *en famille*. Aren't we, gentlemen, all here *en famille*?"

The relation to whom Rostislav Adamich chanced to turn with this question did not, unfortunately, know French, and so he confined himself to a faint grunt of approbation. But another relation, a young man, with patches of a yellow colour on his forehead, hastened to chime in, "Wee, wee, to be sure."

"Perhaps," Mr. Stoppel resumed, "you can walk on your hands, your legs raised, so to say, in the air?"

Nedopyuskin looked round in agony: every face wore a taunting smile, every eye was moist with delight.

"Or perhaps you can crow like a cock?"

A loud guffaw broke out on all sides, and was hushed at once, stifled by expectation.

"Or perhaps on your nose you can..."

"Stop that!" a loud harsh voice suddenly interrupted Rostislav Adamich. "I wonder you're not ashamed to torment the poor man!"

Everyone looked round. In the doorway stood Chertopkhanov. As a cousin four times removed of the deceased contractor, he, too, had received a note of invitation to the meeting of the relations. During

the whole time of reading the will he had kept, as he always did, haughtily apart from the others.

"Stop that!" he repeated, throwing his head back proudly.

Mr. Stoppel turned round quickly, and seeing a poorly dressed, unattractive-looking man, he inquired of his neighbour in an undertone (caution's always a good thing):

"Who's that?"

"Chertopkhanov—a bird of not much importance," the latter whispered in his ear.

Rostislav Adamich assumed a haughty air.

"And who are you to give orders?" he said through his nose, drooping his eyelids scornfully. "What sort of bird are you, allow me to inquire?"

Chertopkhanov exploded like gunpowder at a spark. He was choked with fury.

"Ss-ss-ss!" he hissed like one possessed, and all at once he thundered, "Who am I? Who am I? I'm Pantelei Chertopkhanov, of the ancient hereditary nobility; my forefathers served the Tsar; and who may you be?"

Rostislav Adamich turned pale and stepped back. He had not expected such a rebuff.

"I—I—a bird indeed!"

Chertopkhanov darted forward; Stoppel bounded away in great perturbation, the others rushed to meet the exasperated nobleman.

"A duel, a duel, a duel, at once, on pistols, through a handkerchief!" shouted the enraged Pantelei, "or beg my pardon—yes, and his, too..."

"Pray beg his pardon!" the agitated relations muttered all round Stoppel. "He's such a madman, he'd cut your throat in a minute!"

"I beg your pardon, I beg your pardon, I didn't know," stammered Stoppel, "I didn't know..."

"And beg his, too!" vociferated the implacable Pantelei.

"I beg your pardon, too," added Rostislav Adamich, addressing Nedopyuskin, who was shaking as if he were in an ague.

Chertopkhanov calmed down; he strode up to Tikhon Ivanich, took him by the hand, looked fiercely round, and, as not one pair of eyes ventured to meet his, he walked triumphantly amid profound silence out of the room, with the new owner of the lawfully acquired village of Besselendeyevka.

From that day they never parted again. (The village of Besselende-

yeвка was only eight versts from Bessonovo.) The boundless gratitude of Nedopyuskin was soon transformed into the most adoring veneration. The weak, soft, and not perfectly stainless Tikhon bowed down in the dust before the fearless and irreproachable Pantelei. "It's a wonder," he thought to himself sometimes, "he talks to the governor looking him straight into the face . . . Christ have mercy on us, he just stares him in the face!"

He marvelled at him, he exhausted all the forces of his soul in his admiration of him, he regarded him as an extraordinary man, as clever, as learned. And there's no denying that, bad as Chertopkhanov's education might be, still, in comparison with Tikhon's education, it might pass for brilliant. Chertopkhanov, it is true, had read little Russian, and knew French very badly—so badly that once, in reply to the question of a Swiss tutor: "*Vous parlez français, monsieur?*" he answered: "*Je ne* understand," and after a moment's thought, he added *pas*; but anyway he was aware that Voltaire had once existed, and was a very witty writer, and that Frederick the Great, king of Prussia, had been distinguished as a great military commander. Of Russian writers he respected Derzhavin but liked Marlinsky, and named the best dog of his pack Ammalat-Bek.

A few days after my first meeting with the two friends, I set off for the village of Bessonovo to see Pantelei Eremeich. His little house could be seen a long way off; it was stuck on a bare hill, half a verst from the village, like a hawk on a ploughed field. Chertopkhanov's homestead consisted of nothing more than four old tumble-down log houses of different sizes—that is, the house proper, a stable, a barn, and a bath-house. Each building stood apart by itself; there was neither a fence round nor a gate to be seen. My coachman stopped in perplexity at a well which was choked up and had almost disappeared. Near the barn some thin and unkempt puppies were mangling a dead horse, probably Orbassan; one of them lifted up the blood-smeared muzzle, barked hurriedly, and again fell to chewing the bare ribs. Near the horse stood a boy of seventeen, with a puffy, yellow face, dressed as a servant, and barefoot; he looked with a responsible air at the dogs committed to his charge, and now and then gave the greediest a lash with his whip.

"Is your master at home?" I inquired.

"The Lord knows!" answered the lad. "You'd better knock."

I jumped out of the droshky and went up to the steps of the house.

Mr. Chertopkhanov's dwelling presented a very cheerless aspect: the beams were blackened and bulging forward, the chimney had fallen off, the corners of the house were rotted and sunk out of the perpendicular, the small, dusty, grey windows peeped out from under the shaggy overhanging roof with an indescribably morose expression: some old trollops have eyes like that. I knocked; no one responded. I could hear, however, through the door some sharply uttered words:

"A, B, C; there now, idiot!" a hoarse voice was saying, "A, B, C, D... no! D, E, E., Eat! Eat, idiot!"

I knocked a second time.

The same voice shouted, "Come in; who's there?..."

I went into the small empty hall, and through the open door I saw Chertopkhanov himself. In a greasy Bokhara dressing-gown, loose trousers, and a red skull-cap, he was sitting on a chair; in one hand he gripped the face of a young poodle, while in the other he was holding a piece of bread just above his nose.

"Ah!" he pronounced with dignity, not stirring from his seat. "Delighted to see you. Please sit down. I am busy here training Venzor. Tikhon Ivanich," he added, raising his voice, "come here, will you? We have a visitor."

"I'm coming, I'm coming," Tikhon Ivanich responded from the other room. "Masha, give me my cravat."

Chertopkhanov turned to Venzor again and laid the piece of bread on his nose. I looked round. Except an extending table, much warped, with thirteen legs of unequal length, and four rush chairs worn into hollows, there was no furniture of any kind in the room; the walls, which had been whitewashed ages ago, with blue, star-shaped spots, were peeling off in many places; between the windows hung a broken tarnished mirror in a huge wooden frame painted to look like mahogany. In the corners stood pipe-stands and guns; from the ceiling hung fat black cobwebs.

"A, B, C, D," Chertopkhanov repeated slowly, and suddenly he cried furiously: "E! Eat! What a stupid brute! Eat!"

But the luckless poodle only shivered, and could not make up his mind to open his mouth; he sat, his tail tucked under him uneasily and, wrinkling up his face, blinked dejectedly, and frowned as if to say: "You are the master of course!"

"There, eat! Come! Take it!" repeated the indefatigable master.

"He is afraid of you," I remarked.

"Well, he can get along, then!"

He gave him a kick. The poor dog got up softly, dropped the bread off his nose, and walked out, as though on tiptoe, deeply wounded. And with good reason: a stranger calling for the first time, and his master treats him like that!

The door from the next room gave a subdued creak, and Mr. Nedopyuskin came in, affably bowing and smiling.

I got up and bowed.

"Don't disturb yourself, don't disturb yourself," he lisped.

We sat down. Chertopkhanov went into the next room.

"You have been for some time in our neighbourhood?" began Nedopyuskin in a subdued voice, coughing discreetly into his hand, and holding his fingers before his lips from a feeling of propriety.

"I came last month."

"Indeed."

We were silent for a while.

"Lovely weather we are having just now," resumed Nedopyuskin, and he looked gratefully at me as though I were in some way responsible for the weather, "the corn, one may say, is doing wonderfully."

I nodded in token of assent. We were silent again.

"Pantelei Eremeich was pleased to hunt down two hares yesterday," Nedopyuskin began again with an effort, obviously wishing to enliven the conversation, "yes, indeed, very big hares they were, sir."

"Has Mr. Chertopkhanov good hounds?"

"The most wonderful hounds, sir!" Nedopyuskin replied, delighted. "One may say, the best in the gubernia, indeed." (He drew nearer to me.) "But, then, Pantelei Eremeich is such a wonderful man! He has only to wish for anything—he has only to take an idea into his head—and before you can look round, it's done; everything, you may say, goes like clock-work. Pantelei Eremeich, I assure you..."

Chertopkhanov came into the room. Nedopyuskin smiled, ceased speaking, and indicated him to me with a glance which seemed to say, "There, you will see for yourself." We fell to talking about hunting.

"Would you like me to show you my leash?" Chertopkhanov asked me; and, not waiting for a reply, he called Karp.

A sturdy lad came in, in a green nankeen long coat, with a blue collar and livery buttons.

"Tell Fomka," said Chertopkhanov abruptly, "to bring in Ammalat and Saiga, and in good order, do you understand?"

Karp gave a broad grin, uttered an indefinite sound, and went away. Fomka made his appearance, well combed and tightly buttoned up, in boots, and with the borzois. From politeness, I admired the stupid beasts (borzois are all exceedingly stupid). Chertopkhanov spat right into Ammalat's nostrils, which did not, however, apparently afford that dog the slightest satisfaction. Nedopyuskin, too, stroked Ammalat from behind. We began chatting again. By degrees Chertopkhanov unbent completely, and no longer stood on his dignity nor snorted defiantly; the expression of his face changed. He glanced at me and at Nedopyuskin...

"Hey!" he cried suddenly. "Why should she sit in there alone? Masha! Hey, Masha! Come in here!"

Someone stirred in the next room, but there was no answer.

"Ma-a-sha!" Chertopkhanov repeated caressingly. "Come in here. It's all right, don't be afraid."

The door was softly opened, and I beheld a tall and slender girl of twenty, with a dark gypsy face, golden-brown eyes, and hair black as pitch; her large white teeth gleamed between full red lips. She had on a white dress; a blue shawl, pinned close round her throat with a gold brooch, half hid her slender, beautiful arms, in which one could see the fineness of her race. She took two steps with the bashful awkwardness of a wild creature, stood still, and looked down.

"Come, let me introduce..." said Pantelei Ereimeich, "not exactly my wife but as good as one."

Masha flushed slightly and smiled in confusion. I made her a low bow. I thought her very charming. The delicate falcon nose, with distended, half-transparent nostrils; the bold sweep of her high eyebrows; the pale, almost sunken cheeks—every feature of her face denoted wilful passion and reckless devilry. From under the coil of her hair two rows of little shining hairs ran down her broad neck—a sign of race and vigour.

She went to the window and sat down. I did not want to increase her embarrassment and began talking with Chertopkhanov. Masha turned her head slyly, and began peeping from under her eyelids at me stealthily, shyly, and swiftly. Her glance seemed to flash out like a snake's sting. Nedopyuskin sat beside her and whispered something in her ear. She smiled again. When she smiled, her nose slightly

puckered up, and her upper lip was raised, which gave her face something of the expression of a cat or a lion.

"Oh, but you're one of the 'hands off!' sort," I thought, in my turn stealing a look at her lithe frame, her hollow breast, and her quick, angular movements.

"Masha," Chertopkhanov asked, "don't you think we ought to give our visitor some refreshment, eh?"

"We've got some jam," she replied.

"Well, bring the jam here, and some vodka, too, while you're about it. And, I say, Masha," he shouted after her, "bring the guitar in, too."

"What's the guitar for? I'm not going to sing."

"Why?"

"I don't want to."

"Oh, nonsense; you'll want to when..."

"What?" asked Masha, rapidly knitting her brows.

"When you're asked," Chertopkhanov concluded with some embarrassment.

"Oh!"

She went out, soon came back with jam and vodka, and again sat by the window. There was still a line to be seen on her forehead; the two eyebrows rose and dropped like a wasp's antennae. Have you ever noticed, reader, what a wicked face the wasp has? "Well," I thought, "We're in for a storm." The conversation flagged. Nedopyuskin shut up completely, and wore a forced smile; Chertopkhanov panted, turned red, and opened his eyes wide; I was on the point of taking leave. Suddenly Masha got up, flung open the window, thrust out her head, and shouted lustily to a passing peasant woman, "Aksinya!" The woman started, and tried to turn round, but slipped down and flopped heavily on to the ground. Masha threw herself back and laughed merrily; Chertopkhanov laughed, too. Nedopyuskin shrieked with delight. We all revived. The storm had passed off in one flash of lightning... The air was clear again.

Half an hour later, no one would have recognised us; we were chatting and frolicking like children. Masha was the merriest of all; Chertopkhanov simply could not take his eyes off her. Her face grew paler, her nostrils dilated, her eyes glowed and darkened at the same time. It was a wild creature at play. Nedopyuskin limped after her on his short, fat little legs, like a drake after a duck. Even Venzor crawled out of his hiding place in the hall, stood a moment in the

doorway, glanced at us, and suddenly fell to leaping and barking. Masha flitted into the other room, fetched the guitar, flung off the shawl from her shoulders, seated herself quickly, and, raising her head, began singing a gypsy song. Her voice rang out, vibrating like a cracked glass bell; it flamed up and died away. It filled the heart with sweetness and pain. Chertopkhanov began to dance. Nedopyuskin stamped and swung his legs in tune. Masha was all a-quiver, like birch-bark in the fire; her delicate fingers flew playfully over the guitar, her dark-skinned throat slowly heaved under the two rows of amber beads. All at once she would cease singing, sink into exhaustion, and twang the guitar, listlessly, and Chertopkhanov stood still, merely working his shoulders and shifting his feet, while Nedopyuskin nodded his head like a Chinese figure; then she would break out into song like a mad thing again, drawing herself up and holding up her head, and Chertopkhanov again squatted, leaped up to the ceiling and spun round like a top, crying, "Quicker! . . ."

"Quicker, quicker, quicker!" Nedopyuskin chimed in.

It was late in the evening when I left Bessonovo.

THE END OF CHERTOPKHANOV

I

It was two years after my visit that disasters assailed Pantelei Ereimeich—real disasters. Disappointments, troubles, even misfortunes he had had before that time, but he had paid no attention to them and had risen superior to them in former days. The first blow that fell upon him was the most heart-rending for him. Masha left him.

What induced her to forsake his roof, where she seemed to be so thoroughly at home, it is hard to say. Chertopkhanov, to the end of his days, clung to the conviction that a certain young neighbour, a retired captain of Uhlans, named Yaff, was at the root of Masha's desertion. He had taken her fancy, according to Pantelei Ereimeich, simply by constantly twirling his moustaches, pomading himself to excess, and grunting significantly; but one must suppose that the vagrant gypsy blood in Masha's veins had more to do with it. However that may have been, one fine summer evening Masha tied up a few odds and ends in a small bundle and walked out of Chertopkhanov's house.

For three days before this she had sat crouched up in a corner, huddled against the wall, like a wounded fox, and had not spoken a word to anyone; she had only moved her eyes, and twitched her eyebrows, and bared her teeth, and hugged herself as though shivering with cold. This mood had come upon her before, but had never lasted long; Chertopkhanov knew that, and so he neither worried himself nor worried her. But on coming in from the kennels, where, in his huntsman's words, two hounds "had pegged out", he met a servant girl who, in a trembling voice, informed him that Marya Akinfiyevna sent him her greetings, and left word that she wished him every happiness, but she was not coming back to him any more;

Chertopkhanov, after reeling round where he stood and uttering a hoarse growl, rushed at once after the runaway, snatching up his pistol as he went.

He overtook her two versts from his house, near a birch wood, on the highroad to the uyezd town. The sun was sinking on the horizon, and everything was suddenly suffused with purple glow—trees, grass, and earth alike.

"To Yaff! To Yaff!" groaned Chertopkhanov directly he caught sight of Masha. "Going to Yaff!" he repeated, running up to her and stumbling at every step.

Masha stood still and turned round to face him. She stood with her back to the light and looked all black, as though she had been carved out of ebony; only the whites of her eyes stood out like silvery almonds, but the eyes themselves—the pupils—were darker than ever.

She flung her bundle aside and folded her arms.

"You are going to Yaff, wretched girl!" repeated Chertopkhanov, and he was on the point of seizing her by the shoulder, but, meeting her eyes, he was abashed, and stood uneasily where he was.

"I am not going to Mr. Yaff, Pantelei Eremeich," replied Masha in soft, even tones, "it's only I can't live with you any longer."

"Can't live with me? Why not? Have I offended you in some way?"

Masha shook her head. "You've not offended me in any way, Pantelei Eremeich, only my heart is heavy in your house. Thanks for the past, but I can't stay—no!"

Chertopkhanov was amazed; he positively slapped his thighs, and bounced up and down in his astonishment.

"How is that? Here she's lived with me, and known nothing but joy and happiness, and all of a sudden—her heart's heavy! And she flings me over! She goes and puts a kerchief on her head, and is gone. She received every respect, like any lady."

"I don't care for that in the least," Masha interrupted.

"Don't care for it? From a wandering gypsy to turn into a lady, and she doesn't care for it! How can it be that you don't care for it, you riff-raff? Do you expect me to believe that? There's treachery hidden in it—treachery!"

"There's no treachery in my thoughts, and never has been," said Masha in her distinct, resonant voice. "I've told you already, my heart was heavy."

"Masha!" cried Chertopkhanov, striking himself a blow on the chest with his fist. "There, stop it; hush, you have tortured me enough . . . please! O my God! Think only what Tikhon will say; you might have pity on him, at least!"

"Remember me to Tikhon Ivanich, and tell him . . ."

Chertopkhanov wrung his hands. "No, you are not going! I won't let you! Your Yaff will wait for you in vain!"

"Mr. Yaff . . ." Masha was beginning.

"A fine Mister Yaff!" Chertopkhanov mimicked her. "He's an underhand rascal, a low cur—that's what he is—and a phiz like an ape's!"

For fully half an hour Chertopkhanov struggled with Masha. He came close to her, he fell back, he shook his fists at her, he bowed down before her, he wept, he swore.

"I can't," repeated Masha, "I am so sad at heart . . . devoured by melancholy."

Little by little her face assumed such an indifferent, almost drowsy expression, that Chertopkhanov asked her if they had not drugged her with laudanum.

"It's melancholy," she said for the tenth time.

"What if I kill you?" he cried suddenly, and he pulled the pistol out of his pocket.

Masha smiled; her face brightened.

"Well, kill me, Pantelei Ereimeich; you're free to do so; but go back, I won't."

"You won't come back?" Chertopkhanov cocked the pistol.

"I won't go back, my dearie. Never in my life will I go back. My word is steadfast."

Chertopkhanov suddenly thrust the pistol into her hand and sat down on the ground.

"Then, you kill me! Without you I don't care to live. I have grown loathsome to you—and everything's loathsome for me!"

Masha bent down, took up her bundle, laid the pistol on the grass, its mouth away from Chertopkhanov, and went up to him.

"Ah, my dearie, why torture yourself? Don't you know what we gypsy girls are? It's our nature. When there comes melancholy the divider and calls the soul away to strange, distant parts, we cannot stay in the old place. Don't forget your Masha; you won't find another such sweetheart, and I won't forget you, my dearie; but our life together's over!"

"I loved you, Masha," Chertopkhanov muttered into the fingers in which he had buried his face.

"And I loved you, my sweet friend, Pantelei Ereimeich."

"I love you, I love you madly, senselessly—and when I think now that you are leaving me like this, without rhyme or reason, and going to wander over the face of the earth—well, it strikes me that if I weren't a poor penniless devil, you wouldn't be throwing me over!"

At these words Masha only laughed.

"And he used to say I didn't care for money," she commented, and she gave Chertopkhanov a vigorous thump on the shoulder.

He jumped up onto his feet.

"Come, at least you must let me give you some money—how can you go like this without a kopeck? But best of all: kill me! I tell you plainly: kill me now!"

Masha shook her head again: "Kill you? Why get sent to Siberia, my dearie?"

Chertopkhanov shuddered. "Then it's only from that—from fear of penal servitude!"

He rolled on the grass again.

Masha stood over him in silence. "I'm sorry for you, dear," she said with a sigh. "You're a good fellow . . . but there's no help for it: good-bye!"

She turned away and took two steps. The night had come on by now, and dim shadows were closing in on all sides. Chertopkhanov jumped up swiftly and seized Masha from behind by her elbows.

"So you are going away, you serpent? To Yaff!"

"Good-bye!" Masha repeated sharply and significantly; she tore herself away and walked off.

Chertopkhanov looked after her, ran to the place where the pistol was lying, snatched it up, took aim, fired . . . But before he touched the trigger, his arm twitched upwards; the bullet whistled over Masha's head. She looked at him over her shoulder without stopping, and went on, swinging as she walked, as though in defiance of him.

He hid his face—and fell to running.

But before he had run fifty paces he suddenly stood still as though turned to stone. A well-known, too well-known voice came floating to him. Masha was singing. "It was in the sweet days of youth," she sang; every note seemed to linger plaintive and ardent in the evening air. Chertopkhanov listened intently. The voice retreated and re-

treated; at one moment it died away, at the next it floated across, hardly audible, but still with the same passionate glow.

"She does it to spite me," thought Chertopkhanov; but at once he moaned, "oh, no! It's her last farewell to me for ever,"—and he burst into floods of tears.

The next day he appeared at the lodgings of Mr. Yaff, who, as a true man of the world, not liking the solitude of the country, resided in the uyezd town, "to be nearer the young ladies," as he expressed it. Chertopkhanov did not find Yaff at home: he had, in the words of his valet, set off for Moscow the evening before.

"Then it is so!" cried Chertopkhanov furiously. "There was an arrangement between them; she has run away with him... but wait a bit!"

He broke into the young cavalry captain's room in spite of the resistance of the valet. In the room there was hanging over the sofa a portrait in oils of the master, in the Uhlan uniform. "Ah, here you are, you tailless ape!" thundered Chertopkhanov; he jumped on to the sofa and with a blow of his fist burst a big hole in the taut canvas.

"Tell your worthless master," he turned to the valet, "that, in the absence of his own filthy phiz, the nobleman Chertopkhanov put a hole through the painted one; and if he cares for satisfaction from me, he knows where to find the nobleman Chertopkhanov! Or else I'll find him out myself! I'll fetch the rascally ape from the bottom of the sea!"

Saying these words, Chertopkhanov jumped off the sofa and majestically withdrew.

But the cavalry captain Yaff did not demand satisfaction from him—indeed, he never met him anywhere—and Chertopkhanov did not think of seeking his enemy out, and no scandal followed. Masha disappeared beyond all trace. Chertopkhanov took to drink; however, he "reformed" later. But then a second blow fell him.

II

This was the death of his bosom friend Tikhon Ivanich Nedopyuskin. His health had begun to fail two years before his death: he began to suffer from asthma, and was constantly dropping asleep, and on

waking up could not at once come to himself; the district doctor maintained that this was the result of "little strokes". During the three days which preceded Masha's departure, those three days when "her heart was heavy", Nedopyuskin had been away at his own place at Besselendeyevka: he had been laid up with a severe cold. Masha's decision was consequently even more unexpected for him; it made almost a deeper impression on him than on Chertopkhanov himself. With his natural sweetness and diffidence, he gave utterance to nothing but the tenderest sympathy with his friend, and the most painful perplexity... but it crushed and made havoc of everything in him. "She has torn the heart out of me," he would murmur to himself as he sat on his favourite sofa and twisted his fingers. Even when Chertopkhanov got over it, he, Nedopyuskin, did not recover, and still felt that "there was an emptiness within him". "Here," he would say, pointing to the middle of his breast above his stomach. In that way he lingered on till the winter. When the frosts came, his asthma got better, but he was visited by, not a "little stroke" this time, but a real, unmistakable stroke. He did not lose his memory at once: he still knew Chertopkhanov, and to his friend's cry of despair, "How can you desert me, Tikhon, without my consent, just as Masha did?" he even responded with faltering, uncertain tongue, "O... Pant-lei... E-e-ich, ... am ... al-ways ... glad ... to o-bey you."

This did not, however, prevent him from dying the same day, without waiting for the uyezd doctor, who (on seeing the cold body) found nothing left for him to do but, with a melancholy recognition of the instability of all things mortal, to ask for "a drop of vodka and a snack of sturgeon". As might have been anticipated, Tikhon Ivanich had bequeathed his property to his revered patron and generous protector, Pantelei Eremeich Chertopkhanov; but it was of no great benefit to the revered patron, as it was shortly after sold by public auction, partly in order to cover the expense of a sepulchral monument, a statue, which Chertopkhanov (and one can see his father's streak coming out in him here) had thought fit to put up over the ashes of his friend. This statue, which was to have represented an angel praying, was ordered by him from Moscow; but the agent recommended to him, conceiving that connoisseurs in sculpture were not often to be met with in the provinces, sent him, instead of an angel, a goddess ~~Atena~~ *Athena*, which had for many years adorned one of those neglected gardens near Moscow, laid out in the days of Empress Catherine. He had an excellent reason for doing so, since he had come



Dostoevsky wearing the cap and gown of an Honorary Doctor of Law of Oxford University. Photograph, 1879. One of his contemporaries recalled: "Dostoevsky thought it very amusing that in his old age he should become a doctor of law, having never known how to conclude the simplest of deals. He had this honour conferred on him for the role he was generally believed in the West to have played in bringing about the abolition of serfdom."



The monument to Pushkin unveiled in Moscow on June 6 (18), 1880. This engraving on wood from a drawing by K. Tikhomirov was made in 1880. Turgenev came to Moscow especially for the occasion, and on the following day gave a public reading of his famous "Speech About Pushkin".



Baroness Yulia Vrevskaya (1841-1878), a close friend of Turgenev. During the Bulgarian war of liberation from the Osman yoke, she became a Red Cross nurse and joined the army in the field. Turgenev dedicated a poem in prose to her. Photograph by A. Denier, 1877.

1876

Кроекъ в Виндзоръ

Възлюбъ! Кроекъ! в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те
 Ахъ, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое,
 Ахъ, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое,
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать

Въ дѣлать. Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
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 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать

Ахъ, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое, твое,
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать
 Кроекъ дѣлать те, в Виндзоръ дѣлать

Autograph of "Crocquet in Windsor", a poem by Turgenev, July 20, 1876.

Русский языкъ

Во дни сочиненія, во дни публичныхъ раздумій
о счастіи моеи родины — ты была мною по-
ддержка и опора, о великій, могучій, оправданій и
ободрающихъ русский языкъ! Не будь тебя, какъ
не было бы спасеніе при Вздохо, это сохр.
мечетъ зана? Но неужли, сиречь, зможешь такъ
языкъ не бить за нѣмъ великому на роду!

1882

"Russian Language", Turgenev's poem in prose, 1882, in the author's writing.



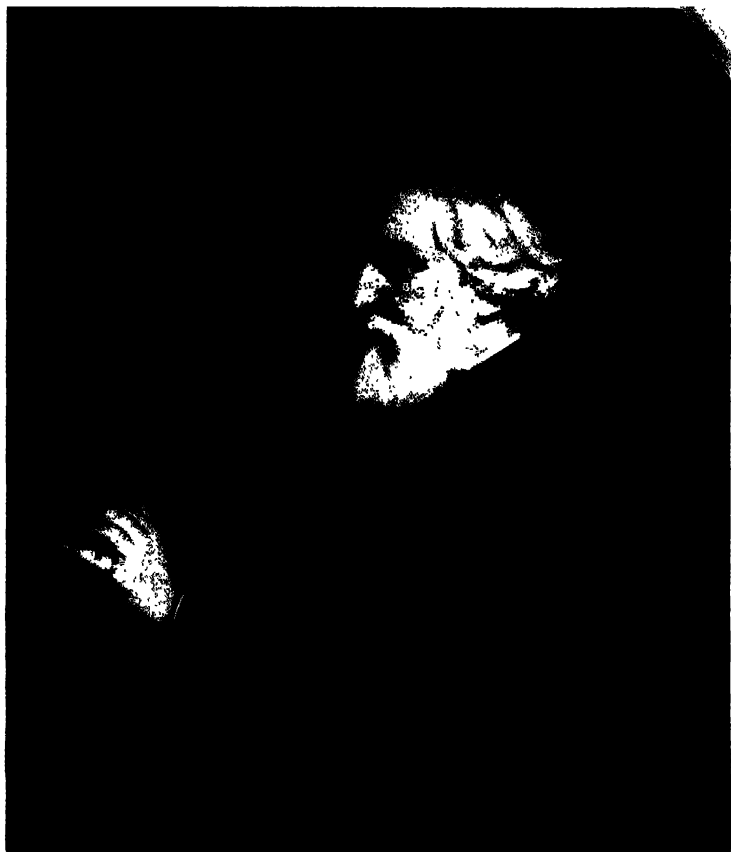
This oak was planted by Turgenev in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo.
Photograph.



Maria Savina (1854-1915), a famous Russian dramatic actress. She was a close friend of Turgenev's and wrote a book of reminiscences about him. Maria Savina appeared with great success in Turgenev's plays. Photograph by K. Shapiro, 1881.



"Savina's Pond", an étude made in oils by Y. Polonsky in 1881 during Maria Savina's visit to Spasskoye-Lutovinovo.



Turgenev. Portrait by V. Perov, 1872.



The monument to Turgenev in Orel. Sculptor G. Bessarabov.



The Turgenev Literary Museum in Orel, opened in 1918. A recent photograph.

by this statue, though highly artistic, in the rococo style, with plump arms, tossing curls, a wreath of roses round the bare bosom, and a sinuous figure, for nothing. And so to this day the mythological goddess stands, with one foot elegantly lifted, above the tomb of Tikhon Ivanich and, with a genuinely Pompadour simper, gazes at the calves and sheep, those invariable visitors of our village graveyards, as they stray about her.

III

On the loss of his faithful friend, Chertopkhanov again took to drink, and this time far more seriously. Everything went utterly to ruin. He had no money left for sport; the last of his meagre fortune was spent; the last of his few servants ran away. Pantelei Ereimeich's isolation became complete: he had no one to speak a word to even, far less to open his heart to. His pride alone had suffered no diminution. On the contrary, the worse his circumstances became, the more haughty and lofty and inaccessible he was himself. He became a complete misanthrope in the end. One distraction, one delight was left him: a superb grey stallion of the Don breed, named by him Malek-Adel, a really wonderful animal.

This horse came into his possession in this fashion.

As he was riding one day through a neighbouring village, Chertopkhanov heard a crowd of peasants shouting and hooting before a tavern. In the middle of the crowd stalwart arms were continually rising and falling in exactly the same place.

"What is happening there?" he asked, in the peremptory tone peculiar to him, of an old peasant woman who was standing on the threshold of her hut. Leaning against the door-post as though dozing, the old woman stared in the direction of the tavern. A flaxen-headed little boy in a print blouse, with a cypress-wood cross on his bare breast, was sitting, with little outstretched legs, and little clenched fists, between her bast shoes; a chicken close by was chipping at a stale crust of rye bread.

"The Lord knows, your honour," answered the old woman. Bending forward, she laid her wrinkled brown hand on the child's head. "They say our lads are beating a Jew."

"A Jew? What Jew?"

"The Lord knows, your honour. A Jew came among us; and where

he's come from—who knows? Vasya, come to your mammy; sh, sh, nasty brute!"

The old woman drove away the chicken, while Vasya clung to her petticoat.

"So, you see, they're beating him, sir."

"Why beating him? What for?"

"I don't know, your honour. No doubt, he deserves it. And, indeed, why not beat him? You know, your honour, he crucified Christ!"

Chertopkhanov uttered a whoop, gave his horse a lash on the neck with the riding-whip, flew straight towards the crowd, and plunging into it, began with the same riding-whip thrashing the peasants to left and to right indiscriminately, shouting in broken tones, "Lawless brutes! Lawless brutes! It's for the law to punish, and not private persons! The law! The law! The law!"

Before two minutes had passed the crowd had dispersed in various directions; and on the ground before the tavern door could be seen a small, thin, swarthy creature, in a long nankeen coat, dishevelled and mangled... a pale face, rolling eyes, open mouth... What was it?... Deadly terror, or death itself?

"Why have you killed this Jew?" Chertopkhanov shouted at the top of his voice, brandishing his riding-whip menacingly.

The crowd muttered faintly in response. One peasant was rubbing his shoulder, another his side, a third his nose.

"What a ruffian!" was heard in the back rows.

"You're pretty free with your whip!" said another voice.

"Why have you killed the Jew, you heathens?" repeated Chertopkhanov.

But at this point, the creature lying on the ground jumped on to its feet, and, running up to Chertopkhanov, convulsively seized hold of the edge of the saddle.

A mighty burst of laughter came from the crowd.

"Alive!" was heard in the background. "He's nine lives!"

"Your ex-shelency, defend me, save me!" the unhappy Jew was faltering meanwhile, clinging so Chertopkhanov's foot. "Or they will murder me, they will murder me, your ex-shellency!"

"What have they against you?" asked Chertopkhanov.

"I can't tell, so help me God! Some cows hereabouts died... so they suspect me... but I..."

"Well, that we'll go into later!" Chertopkhanov interrupted. "But now, you hold on to the saddle and follow me. And you," he added,

turning to the crowd, "do you know me?—I'm the landlord Pantelei Chertopkhanov. I live at Bessonovo . . . and so you can take proceedings against me, when you think fit—and against the Jew, too, while you're about it!"

"Why take proceedings?" said a grey-bearded, decent-looking peasant, bowing low, the very picture of an ancient patriarch. (He had been no whit behind the others in belabouring the Jew, however.) "We know your honour, Pantelei Ereimeich, well; we thank your honour humbly for teaching us better!"

"Why take proceedings?" chimed in the others. "As to the Jew, we'll take it out of him another day! He won't escape us! We shall be on the look-out for him."

Chertopkhanov jerked his moustaches, snorted, and went home at a walking pace, accompanied by the Jew, whom he had delivered from his persecutors just as he had once delivered Tikhon Nedopyuskin.

IV

A few days later the one servant boy who was left to Chertopkhanov announced that someone had come on horseback and wanted to speak to him. Chertopkhanov went out onto the porch and recognised the Jew, riding a splendid horse of the Don breed, which stood proud and motionless in the middle of the courtyard. The Jew was bareheaded; he held his cap under his arm, and had thrust his feet into the stirrup-straps, not into the stirrups themselves; the ragged skirts of his long coat hung down on both sides of the saddle. On seeing Chertopkhanov, he gave a smack with his lips and twitched his elbows and threshed his legs. Chertopkhanov, however, not only failed to respond to his greeting, but was even enraged by it; he was all on fire in a minute: a scurvy Jew dare to ride a magnificent horse like that! . . . It was positively indecent!

"Hey you, Ethiopian mug!" he shouted. "Get off at once, if you don't want to be flung off into the mud!"

The Jew promptly obeyed, rolled off the horse like a sack, and keeping hold of the rein with one hand, he approached Chertopkhanov, smiling and bowing.

"What do you want?" Pantelei Ereimeich inquired with dignity.

"Your ex-shelency, deign to look what a horse!" said the Jew, never ceasing to bow for an instant.

"Er... well... the horse is all right. Where did you get it? Stole it, I suppose?"

"How can you say that, your ex-shelency! I'm an honest Jew. I didn't steal it, but I obtained it for your ex-shelency—really! And the trouble, the trouble I had to get it! But, then, see what a horse it is! There's not another horse like it to be found in all the Don country! Look, your ex-shelency, what a horse it is! Here, kindly step this way! Wo!... wo!... turn round, stand sideways! And we'll take off the saddle. What do you think of him, your ex-shelency?"

"The horse is all right," repeated Chertopkhanov with affected indifference, though his heart was beating like a sledge-hammer in his breast. He was a passionate lover of horseflesh, and knew a good thing when he saw it.

"Pat him, your ex-shelency! Pat him on the neck! He-he-he-he! Yes, like this, like this!"

Chertopkhanov, with apparent reluctance, laid his hand on the horse's neck, gave it a pat or two, then passed his fingers along the spine, and when he had reached a certain spot above the kidneys, like a connoisseur, he lightly pressed that spot. The horse instantly arched its neck, and looking round at Chertopkhanov with its haughty black eye, snorted and shifted its forelegs.

The Jew laughed and clapped his hands. "He knows his master, your ex-shelency, he knows his master!"

"Don't talk nonsense," Chertopkhanov interrupted with vexation. "To buy this horse from you... I haven't the means, and as for presents, I not only wouldn't take them from a Jew, I wouldn't take a present from Almighty God Himself!"

"As though I would presume to offer you a present, mercy upon me!" cried the Jew. "You buy it, your ex-shelency... and as to the money—I can wait for it."

Chertopkhanov sank into thought.

"What will you take for it?" he muttered at last between his teeth.

The Jew shrugged his shoulders.

"What I paid for it myself. Two hundred rubles."

The horse was well worth twice—perhaps even three times that sum.

Chertopkhanov turned away and yawned feverishly.

"And the money... when?" he asked, scowling furiously and not at the Jew.

"When your ex-shelency thinks fit."

Chertopkhanov flung his head back but did not raise his eyes. "That's no answer. Speak plainly, Herod's spawn! Am I to be under an obligation to you, hey?"

"Well, let's say, then," the Jew hastened to add, "in six months' time. Do you agree?"

Chertopkhanov made no reply.

The Jew tried to get a look at his face. "Do you agree? You permit me to take him to your stable?"

"I don't want the saddle," Chertopkhanov said abruptly. "Take the saddle—do you hear?"

"To be sure, to be sure, I will take it," faltered the delighted Jew, shouldering the saddle.

"And the money," Chertopkhanov pursued, "in six months. And not two hundred, but two hundred and fifty. Not a word! Two hundred and fifty, I tell you! To my account!"

Chertopkhanov still could not bring himself to raise his eyes. Never had his pride been so cruelly wounded.

"It's plainly a present," was the thought in his mind, "he's brought it out of gratitude, the devil!" And he would have liked to hug the Jew, and he would have liked to beat him up.

"Your ex-shelency," began the Jew, gaining a little courage, and grinning all over his face, "should we, after the Russian fashion, pass him from hand to hand..."

"What next? What an idea! A Hebrew... and Russian customs! Hey! You there! Take the horse; lead him to the stable. And give him some oats. I'll come myself and look after him. And his name is to be—Malek-Adel!"

Chertopkhanov made to go up the steps, but turning sharply back and running up to the Jew, he pressed his hand warmly. The latter was bending down to kiss his hand, but Chertopkhanov bounded back again, and murmuring, "Tell no one!" he vanished through the door.

V

From that day on the chief interest, the chief occupation, the chief joy in the life of Chertopkhanov, was Malek-Adel. He loved him as he had not loved even Masha; he became more attached to him than

even to Nedopyuskin. And what a horse it was! All fire—simply explosive as gunpowder—and stately as a boyar! Untiring, enduring, obedient, whatever you might put him to; and costing nothing for his keep; he'd be ready to nibble at the ground under his feet if there was nothing else. When he stepped at a walking pace, it was like being lulled to sleep in a nurse's arms; when he trotted, it was like rocking in a cradle; when he galloped, he outstripped the wind! Never out of breath, perfectly sound in his wind. Sinews of steel: for him to stumble was an unheard thing! To take a ditch or a fence was nothing to him—and what a clever beast! At his master's voice he would run with his head in the air; if you told him to stand still and walked away from him, he would not stir; when you come back, he would give a faint neigh to say, 'Here I am.' And afraid of nothing: in the pitch dark, in a snow-storm he would find his way; and he would not let a stranger come near him for anything; he would have his teeth in him! And a dog dare never approach him: he would tap him with his foreleg on the head—and that was the end of the beast. A horse of proper pride, you might flourish a switch over him as an ornament—but God forbid you touched him! But why say more?—a perfect treasure, not a horse!

If Chertopkhanov set to describing his Malek-Adel, he expressed himself in glowing terms. And how he petted and pampered him! His coat shone like silver—not old, but new silver—with a dark polish on it; if one passed one's hand over it, it was like velvet! His saddle, his cloth, his bridle—all his trappings, in fact, were so well-fitted, in such good order, so bright—a perfect picture! Chertopkhanov himself—what more can we say?—with his own hands plaited his favourite's forelock, and washed his mane and tail with beer, and even, more than once, rubbed his hoofs with polish. He would mount Malek-Adel and ride out, not to see his neighbours—he avoided them, as of old—but across their lands, past their mansions... for them, poor fools, to admire him from a distance! Or he would hear that there was to be a hunt somewhere, that a rich landlord had arranged a meet in some outlying part of his land: he would be off there at once, and would canter in the distance, on the horizon, astounding all spectators by the swiftness and beauty of his horse, and not letting anyone come close to him. Once some hunting landlord even gave chase to him with all his suite; he saw Chertopkhanov was getting away, and he began shouting after him with all his might, as he galloped at full speed, "Hey, you, there! Take what you like for your horse! I

wouldn't grudge a thousand! I'd give my wife, my children! Take my last kopeck!"

Chertopkhanov suddenly reined in Malek-Adel. The hunting gentleman flew up to him. "My dear sir!" he shouted. "Tell me what you want? My dear friend!"

"If you were the Tsar," said Chertopkhanov emphatically (and he had never heard of Shakespeare), "you might give me all your kingdom for my horse; I wouldn't take it!" He uttered these words, chuckled, drew Malek-Adel up on to his hind legs, turned him in the air like a top or teetotum, and off he went like a flash over the stubble. And the sportsman (a rich prince, they said, he was) flung his cap on the ground, threw himself down with his face in his cap, and lay so for half an hour.

And how could Chertopkhanov fail to prize his horse? Was it not thanks to him he had again an unmistakable superiority, a last superiority over all his neighbours?

VI

Meanwhile time went by, the day fixed for payment was approaching; while, far from having two hundred and fifty rubles, Chertopkhanov had not even fifty. What was to be done? How could the debt be met? "Well," he decided at last, "if the Jew does not agree to wait any longer, I'll give him my house and my land, and I'll set off on my horse, no matter where! I'll starve before I'll give up Malek-Adel!" He was greatly perturbed and even depressed; but at this juncture Fate, for the first and last time, took pity and smiled upon him: some distant kinswoman, whose very name was unknown to Chertopkhanov, left him in her will a sum immense in his eyes—no less than two thousand rubles! And he received this sum in the very nick, as they say, of time: the day before the Jew was to come. Chertopkhanov almost went out of his mind with joy, but he never even thought of vodka; from the very day Malek-Adel came into his hands he had not touched a drop. He ran into the stable and kissed his favourite on both sides of his face above the nostrils, where the horse's skin is always so soft. "Now we shall not be parted!" he cried, patting Malek-Adel on the neck, under his well-combed mane. Back in his house, he counted out and sealed up in a packet two hundred and fifty rubles. Then, as he lay on his back and smoked a pipe, he mused on how he would lay out the rest of the money—what dogs

he would procure, real Kostroma hounds, spot and tan, and no mistake! He even had a little chat with Perfishka, to whom he promised a new coat, with yellow braid on all the seams, and went to bed in a blissful frame of mind.

He had a bad dream: he dreamt he was riding out, hunting, not on Malek-Adel, but on some strange beast of the nature of a camel; a white fox, white as snow, ran to meet him . . . He tried to crack his whip, tried to set the dogs on her—but instead of his riding-whip, he found he had a wisp of bast in his hand, and the fox ran in front of him, putting her tongue out at him. He jumped off his camel, stumbled and fell . . . fell straight into the arms of a police constable, who was taking him before the Governor-General, and whom he recognised as Yaff . . .

Chertopkhanov awoke. The room was dark; the cocks were just crowing for the second time . . . Somewhere in the far, far distance a horse neighed. Chertopkhanov lifted his head. Once more a faint, faint neigh was heard.

"That's Malek-Adel neighing!" was his thought. "It's his neigh. But why so far away? Bless us and save us! . . . It can't be . . ."

Chertopkhanov suddenly turned 'chill all over; he instantly leaped out of bed, fumbled after his boots and his clothes, dressed himself, and, snatching up the stable door key from under his pillow, dashed out into the courtyard.

VII

The stable was at the very end of the courtyard; one wall faced the open country. Chertopkhanov could not at once fit the key into the lock—his hands were shaking—and he did not immediately turn the key. He stood motionless, holding his breath; if only something would stir inside! "Malek! Malek!" he cried in a low voice: the silence of death! Chertopkhanov unconsciously joggled the key; the door creaked and opened. So, it was not locked! He stepped over the threshold and again called his horse; this time by his full name, Malek-Adel! But no response came from his faithful companion; only a mouse rustled in the straw. Then Chertopkhanov rushed into one of the three horse-boxes in the stable in which Malek-Adel was put. He went straight to the horse-box, though it was pitch dark around . . . Empty! Chertopkhanov's head went round; it seemed as though a bell were booming in his brain. He tried to say something, but only

brought out a sort of hiss; and fumbling with his hands above, below, on all sides, breathless, with shaking knees, he made his way from one horse-box to another . . . to a third, full almost to the top of hay; stumbled against one wall, and then the other; fell down, rolled over on his head, got up, and suddenly ran headlong through the half-open door into the courtyard.

"They stole'm, Perfishka! Perfishka! They stole him!" he yelled at the top of his voice.

The groom Perfishka flew head over heels out of the loft where he slept, with only his shirt on.

Like drunken men they ran against each other, the master and his solitary servant, in the middle of the courtyard; like madmen they dashed about. The master could not explain what was the matter; nor could the servant make out what was wanted of him. "Woe! woe!" wailed Chertopkhanov. "Woe! Woe!" the groom repeated after him. "A lantern! Here! Light a lantern! Light! Light!" broke at last from Chertopkhanov's faint breast. Perfishka rushed into the house.

But to light the lantern, to get fire, was not easy: lucifer matches were regarded as a rarity in those days in Russia; the last embers had long ago gone out in the kitchen; flint and steel were not quickly found, and they did not work well. Gnashing his teeth, Chertopkhanov snatched them out of the hands of the flustered Perfishka and began striking a light himself; the sparks fell in abundance, in still greater abundance fell curses, and even groans; but the tinder either did not catch or went out again, in spite of the united efforts of four tense cheeks and lips to blow it into a flame! At last, in five minutes, not sooner, a bit of tallow candle was alight at the bottom of a battered lantern; and Chertopkhanov, accompanied by Perfishka, dashed into the stable, lifted the lantern above his head, looked round . . .

All empty!

He bounded out into the courtyard, ran up and down it in all directions—no horse anywhere! The fence, enclosing Pantelei Ereimeich's yard, had long been dilapidated, and in many places was bent and lying on the ground . . . Beside the stable, it had been completely levelled for a good yard's width. Perfishka pointed this spot out to Chertopkhanov.

"Master! Look here; this didn't use to be like this. And there are the uprights; that means someone has pulled them out."

Chertopkhanov ran up with the lantern, swung it about over the ground.

"Hoofs, hoofs, prints of horse-shoes, fresh prints!" he muttered, speaking hurriedly. "They took him through here, through here!"

He instantly leaped over the fence, and with a shout, "Malek-Adel! Malek-Adel!" ran straight into the open country.

Perfishka remained standing bewildered at the fence. The ring of light from the lantern was soon lost to his eyes, swallowed up in the dense darkness of a starless, moonless night.

Fainter and fainter came the sound of the despairing cries of Chertopkhanov.

VIII

It was daylight when he came home again. He hardly looked like a human being. His clothes were covered with mud, his face had a wild and ferocious expression, his eyes looked dull and sullen. In a hoarse whisper he drove Perfishka away and locked himself in his room. He could hardly stand with fatigue, but he did not lie on his bed, but sat down on a chair by the door and clutched at his head.

"Stolen! Stolen!..."

But how had the thief contrived to steal Malek-Adel by night, when the stable was locked? Malek-Adel, who would never let a stranger come near him even by day—steal him, too, without noise, without a sound? And how explain that not a yard dog had barked? It was true there were only two left—two young puppies—and those two probably burrowing in rubbish from cold and hunger—but still!

"And what am I to do now without Malek-Adel?" Chertopkhanov brooded. "I've lost my last joy now; it's time to die. Buy another horse, seeing the money has come? But where find another horse like that?"

"Pantelei Ereimeich! Pantelei Ereimeich!" he heard a timid call at the door.

Chertopkhanov jumped on to his feet.

"Who is it?" he shouted in a voice not his own.

"It's I, your groom, Perfishka."

"What do you want? Is he found? Has he run home?"

"No, Pantelei Ereimeich; but that Jew chap who sold him..."

"Well?"

"He's come."

"Ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!" yelled Chertopkhanov, and he at once flung open the door. "Get him here! Drag him along!"

On seeing the sudden apparition of his "benefactor's" dishevelled, wild-looking figure, the Jew, who was standing behind Perfishka's back, tried to take to his heels; but Chertopkhanov, in two bounds, was upon him, and like a tiger flew at his throat.

"Ah! He's come for the money! For the money!" he cried as hoarsely as though he were being strangled himself instead of strangling the Jew. "You stole him by night, and come by day for the money, eh? Eh? Eh?"

"Mercy on us, your ex-shelency," the Jew tried to groan out.

"Tell me, where's my horse? What have you done with him? Who have you sold him to? Tell me, tell me, tell me!"

The Jew by now could not even groan; his face was rapidly turning livid, and even the expression of fear had vanished from it. His hands dropped and hung lifeless, his whole body, furiously shaken by Chertopkhanov, waved backwards and forwards like a reed.

"I'll pay you your money, I'll pay it you in full to the last kopeck," roared Chertopkhanov, "but I'll strangle you like any chicken if you don't tell me at once! . . ."

"But you have strangled him already, master," observed the groom Perfishka humbly.

Then only Chertopkhanov came to his senses.

He let go of the Jew's neck; the latter fell heavily to the ground. Chertopkhanov picked him up, sat him on a bench, poured a glass of vodka down his throat, and restored him to consciousness. And having restored him to consciousness, he began to talk to him.

It turned out that the Jew had not the slightest idea that Malek-Adel had been stolen. And, indeed, what motive could he have to steal the horse which he had himself procured for his "revered Pantelei Eremeich"!

Then Chertopkhanov led him into the stable.

Together they scrutinised the horse-boxes, the manger, and the lock on the door, turned over the hay and the straw, and then went into the courtyard. Chertopkhanov showed the Jew the hoof-prints on the fence, and all at once he slapped his thighs.

"Stay!" he cried. "Where did you buy the horse?"

"In the Maloarkhangelsk Uyezd, at Verkhosenskaya fair," answered the Jew.

"Of whom?"

"A Cossack."

"Stay! This Cossack, was he a young man or old?"

"Middle-aged."

"And what was he like? What did he look like? A cunning rascal, I expect?"

"Sure to have been a rascal, your ex-shelency."

"And, I say, what did he say, this rascal?—had he had the horse long?"

"I recollect he said he'd had it a long while!"

"Well, then, no one could have stolen him but he! Consider it yourself, listen, stand here!... What's your name?"

The Jew started and turned his little black eyes upon Chertopkhanov.

"What's my name?"

"Yes, yes; what are you called?"

"Moshel Leyba."

"Well, judge then, Moshel Leyba, my friend—you're a man of sense—whom would Malek-Adel have allowed to touch him except his old master? You see he must have saddled him and bridled him and taken off his cloth—there it is lying on the hay!—and did all he needed as if he were at home! Why, anyone except his master, Malek-Adel would have trampled underfoot! He'd have raised such a din, he'd have roused the whole village! Do you agree with me?"

"I agree, I agree, your ex-shelency."

"Well, then, it follows that first of all we must find this Cossack!"

"But how are we to find him, your ex-shelency? I have only seen him one little time in my life, and where is he now, and what's his name? Alack, alack!" added the Jew, shaking his long curls sorrowfully.

"Leyba!" shouted Chertopkhanov suddenly, "Leyba, look at me! You see I've lost my senses; I'm not myself!... I shall kill myself if you don't come to my aid!"

"But how can I?"

"Come with me, and let us find the thief."

"But where shall we go?"

"We'll go to the fairs, the highways and by-ways, to the horse-stealers, to towns and villages and hamlets—everywhere, everywhere! And don't trouble about money; I've come into a fortune.

brother! I'll spend my last kopeck, but I'll get my darling back! And he shan't escape us, the friend, this Cossack! Where he goes we'll go! If he buries himself in the earth we'll follow him! If he's gone to the devil, we'll follow him to Satan himself!"

"Oh, why to Satan?" observed the Jew. "We can do without him."

"Leyba!" Chertopkhanov went on. "Leyba, though you're a Jew, and your creed's an accursed one, you've a soul better than many a Christian soul! Have pity on me! I can't go alone; alone I can never carry the thing through. I'm a hot-headed fellow, but you've a brain—a brain worth its weight in gold! Your race are like that; you succeed in everything without being taught! You're doubting, perhaps, that I have the money? Come into my room—I'll show you all the money. You may take it, you may take the cross off my neck, only give me back Malek-Adel; return him to me."

Chertopkhanov was shivering as if he were in a fever; the sweat rolled down his face in drops, and, mingling with his tears, was lost in his moustaches. He pressed Leyba's hands, he besought him, he almost kissed him... He was in a frenzy. The Jew tried to object, to declare that it was utterly impossible for him to get away; that he had business... It was useless! Chertopkhanov would not even listen. There was no help for it; the poor Jew consented.

The next day Chertopkhanov set out from Bessonovo in a peasant cart, with Leyba. The Jew wore a somewhat troubled aspect; he held on to the edge with one hand, his withered figure bouncing up and down on the jolting seat; the other hand he held pressed to his bosom, where lay a packet of notes wrapped up in newspaper. Chertopkhanov sat like a statue, only moving his eyes about him and drawing in deep breaths; in his sash there was stuck a dagger.

"The miscreant who has parted us must look out for himself now!" he muttered, as they drove out on the highroad.

His house he left in the charge of Perfishka and an old cook, a deaf peasant woman, whom he took in out of compassion.

"I shall come back to you on Malek-Adel," he shouted to them at parting, "or never come back at all!"

"Let's get married, shall we?" jested Perfishka, giving the cook a dig in the ribs with his elbow. "No fear! The master'll never come back to us; and here we shall be bored to death all by ourselves!"

IX

A year passed . . . a whole year: no news had come of Pantelei Ereimeich. The cook was dead; Perfishka himself made up his mind to abandon the house and go off to town, where he was constantly being persuaded to come by his cousin, apprenticed to a barber, when suddenly a rumour was set afloat that his master was coming back. The parish deacon got a letter from Pantelei Ereimeich himself, in which he informed him of his intention of arriving at Bessonovo, and asked him to tell his servants to be ready for his immediate return. These words Perfishka understood to mean that he was to dust and sweep up the place a bit. He did not, however, put much confidence in the news; the truth of the deacon's words, however, was borne out, when a few days later Pantelei Ereimeich in person appeared in the courtyard, riding Malek-Adel.

Perfishka rushed up to his master and, holding the stirrup, would have helped him to dismount, but the latter jumped down without his aid, and with a triumphant glance about him, cried in a loud voice, "I said I would find Malek-Adel, and I have found him in spite of my enemies, and of Fate itself!" Perfishka went up to kiss his hand, but Chertopkhanov paid no attention to his servant's devotion. Leading Malek-Adel by the rein, he went with long strides towards the stable. Perfishka looked more intently at his master, and his heart sank. "Oh, how thin and old he's grown in a year; and what a stern, grim face!" One would have expected Pantelei Ereimeich to rejoice that he had gained his end; and he was rejoicing, certainly . . . and yet Perfishka's heart sank; he even felt a sort of dread. Chertopkhanov put the horse in its old place, gave him a light pat on the haunches, and said, "There! Now you're at home again; and mind what you're about." The same day he hired a watchman, established himself again in his rooms, and began living as before.

Not altogether as before, however . . . But of that later.

The day after his return, Pantelei Ereimeich called Perfishka in to him, and for want of anyone else to talk to, began telling him—keeping up, of course, his sense of his own dignity and his bass voice—how he had succeeded in finding Malek-Adel. Chertopkhanov sat facing the window while he told his story, and smoked a pipe with a long stem, while Perfishka stood in the doorway, his hands behind his back, and, respectfully contemplating the back of his master's head, heard him relate how, after many fruitless efforts and idle expedi-

tions, Pantelei Eremeich had at last come to the fair at Romni by himself, without the Jew Leyba, who, through weakness of character, had not persevered, but had deserted him; how, on the fifth day, when he was on the point of leaving, he walked for the last time along the rows of carts, and all at once he saw between three other horses fastened to the railings—he saw Malek-Adel! How he knew him at once, and how Malek-Adel knew him, too, and began neighing, and pulling at his tether, and scraping the earth with his hoof.

“And he was not with the Cossack,” Chertopkhanov went on, still not turning his head, and in the same bass voice, “but with a gypsy horse-dealer; I, of course, at once took hold of my horse and tried to get him away by force, but the brute of a gypsy started yelling as if he’d been scalded, all over the market, and began swearing he’d bought the horse off another gypsy—and wanted to bring witnesses to prove it. I spat, and paid him the money: damn the fellow! All I cared for was that I had found my friend and had got back my peace of mind. Before that in Karachev Uyezd, I took a man for the Cossack—I took the Jew Leyba’s word for it that he was my thief—and smashed his face for him; but the Cossack turned out to be a priest’s son, and got damages out of me—a hundred and twenty rubles. Well, money’s so much dust, but the great thing is, I’ve Malek-Adel back again! I’m happy now—I’m going to enjoy myself in peace. And I’ve one instruction to give you, Perfishka: if ever you, which God forbid, catch sight of a Cossack in this neighbourhood, run to me the very minute and bring me my gun, and I shall know what to do!”

This was what Pantelei Eremeich said to Perfishka: that was how his tongue spoke; but at heart he was not so completely at peace as he declared.

Alas! in his heart of hearts he was not perfectly convinced that the horse he had brought back was really Malek-Adel!

Troubled times followed for Pantelei Eremeich. Peace was the last thing he enjoyed. He had some happy days, it is true; the doubt stirring within him would seem to him all nonsense; he would drive away the ridiculous idea, like a persistent fly, and even laugh at himself; but he had bad days, too: the importunate thought began again stealthily gnawing and tearing at his heart, like a mouse under the floor, and he was eaten up by secret torment. On the memorable

day when he found Malek-Adel, Chertopkhanov had felt nothing but rapturous bliss; but the next morning, when, in a low-pitched shed of the inn, he began saddling his recovered joy, beside whom he had spent the whole night, he felt for the first time a certain secret pang. He only shook his head, but the seed was sown. During the homeward journey (it lasted a whole week) doubts seldom arose in him; they grew stronger and more distinct when he was back at Bessonovo, again in the place where the old authentic Malek-Adel had lived. On the road home he had ridden at a quiet, swinging pace, looking round, smoking a short pipe, and not reflecting at all, except at times the thought struck him: "When the Chertopkhanovs want a thing, they get it, you bet!" and he smiled to himself; but on his return home things took on a very different aspect. All this, of course, he kept to himself; vanity alone would have prevented him from giving utterance to his inner dread. He would have torn to pieces anyone who dropped the most distant hint that the new Malek-Adel was possibly not the old one; he accepted congratulations on "the successful recovery of his horse" from the few persons whom he happened to meet; but he did not seek such congratulations; he avoided all contact with people more than ever—a bad sign! He was almost always putting Malek-Adel through one test or another, if one may use the expression; he would ride him out to some point at a great distance in the open country, and put him to the proof, or would go stealthily into the stable, lock the door after him, and standing right before the horse's head, look into his eyes, and ask him in a whisper, "Is it you? Is it you? You?" . . . or else stare at him silently and intently for hours at an end, and then mutter, brightening up, "Yes! It's he! Of course it's he!" or else go out with a puzzled, even confused look on his face.

Chertopkhanov was not so much confused by the physical differences between ~~this~~ Malek-Adel and ~~that~~ one . . . though there were a few such differences: ~~that~~ one's tail and mane were a little thinner, and his ears more pointed, and his pasterns shorter, and his eyes lighter—but all that might be only fancy; what confounded Chertopkhanov most were, so to say, the moral differences. The habits of ~~that~~ one had been different: all his ways were not the same. For instance, ~~that~~ Malek-Adel had looked round and given a faint neigh every time Chertopkhanov went into the stable; while ~~this~~ one went on munching hay as though nothing had happened, or dozed with his head bent. Both of them stood still when their master leaped out of

the saddle; but **that** one came at once when he was called, while **this** one stood stock-still. **That** one galloped as fast, but with higher and longer bounds; **this** one went with a freer step and at a more jolting trot, and at times knocked the back shoe against the front one; **that** one had never done anything so disgraceful—God forbid! **This** one, it struck Chertopkhanov, kept twitching his ears in such a stupid way, while with **that** one it was quite the contrary: he used to lay one ear back, and hold it so, as though on the alert for his master! **That** one, directly he saw that it was soiled about him, would at once knock on the partition of his box with his hind leg, but **this** one did not care if the dung was heaped up to his belly. **That** one, if, for instance, he were set facing the wind, would take deep breaths and shake himself, **this** one simply snorted; **that** one was put out by the rain, **this** one cared nothing for it. This was a coarser beast—coarser! And there wasn't the gentleness in it, and hard in the mouth it was—no denying it! That horse was a darling, but **this**...

This was what Chertopkhanov sometimes thought, and very bitter were such thoughts to him. At other times he would set his horse at full gallop over some newly ploughed field, or would make him leap down to the very bottom of a ravine, and leap out again at the very steepest point, and his heart would throb with rapture, a loud whoop would break from his lips, and he would know, would know for certain, that it was the real, authentic Malek-Adel he had under him, for what other horse could do what **this** one was doing?

However, there were sometimes discomfitures and setbacks even here. The prolonged search for Malek-Adel had cost Chertopkhanov a great deal of money; he did not even dream of Kostroma hounds now, and rode about the neighbourhood in solitude as before. One morning, five versts from Bessonovo, Chertopkhanov chanced to come upon the same prince's hunting party before whom he had cut such a triumphant figure a year and a half before. And, as Fate would have it, just as on that day the hare must go leaping out from the hedge before the dogs, and streak up the hillside! Tally-ho! Tally-ho! All the hunt fairly flew after it, and Chertopkhanov flew along, too, but not with the rest of the party, but two hundred paces to one side of it, just as he had done the time before. A huge watercourse ran zigzagging across the hillside cutting off Chertopkhanov's path and as it rose higher and higher got gradually narrower. At the point where he had to jump it, and where, eighteen months before, he actually had jumped it, it was still fifteen feet wide and fourteen feet deep.

In anticipation of a triumph—a triumph repeated in such a delightful way—Chertopkhanov whooped exultantly, cracking his riding-whip; the hunting party were galloping, too, their eyes fixed on the daring rider; his horse whizzed along like a bullet, and now the watercourse was just under his nose—now, now, at one leap, as then!... But Malek-Adel pulled up sharply, wheeled to the left, and in spite of Chertopkhanov's tugging him to the edge, to the watercourse, he galloped along beside the ravine.

He showed the white feather, then; he did not trust himself!

That time Chertopkhanov, burning with shame and wrath, almost in tears, dropped the reins and set the horse going straight forward, away, away from the hunting party, if only not to hear them jeering at him, to escape as soon as might be from their damnable eyes!

Covered with foam, his sides lashed unmercifully, Malek-Adel galloped home, and Chertopkhanov at once locked himself into his room.

"No, it's not he; it's not my darling! He would have broken his neck before he would have betrayed me!"

IX

What finally "did for" Chertopkhanov, as they say, was the following episode. One day he rode along past the back-yards of the priests' quarters round about the parish church. Huddled up, with his Cossack fur cap pulled down over his eyes, and his hands on the saddle-bow, he jogged slowly on, a vague discontent in his heart. Suddenly someone called him.

He stopped his horse, raised his head, and saw his correspondent, the deacon. With a brown fur hat on his brown hair, which was plaited in a pigtail, attired in a yellowish nankeen coat, girt much below the waist by a strip of blue stuff, the servant of the altar had come out into his back-garden, and, catching sight of Pantelei Eremeich, he thought it his duty to pay his respects to him, and, while he was at it, to beseech some sort of favour. Without some such hidden motive, as we know, ecclesiastical persons do not address temporal ones.

But Chertopkhanov was in no mood for the deacon; he barely responded to his bow, and, muttering something between his teeth, he was already raising his whip, when...

"What a magnificent horse you have!" the deacon made haste to add. "And really you can take credit to yourself for it. Truly you're a man of amazing cleverness, a lion indeed!"

The deacon prided himself on his eloquence, which was a great source of vexation to the priest, to whom the gift of words had not been vouchsafed; even vodka did not loosen his tongue.

"After losing one animal by the cunning of evil men," continued the deacon, "you did not lose courage in repining; but, on the other hand, trusting the more confidently in Divine Providence, procured yourself another, in no wise inferior, but even, one may say, superior, since..."

"What nonsense are you talking?" Chertopkhanov interrupted gloomily. "What other horse do you mean? This is the same one; this is Malek-Adel... I found him. The fellow's raving!"

"Ay! ay! ay!" responded the deacon emphatically with a sort of drawl, fingering his beard and eyeing Chertopkhanov with his bright eager eyes. "How's that, sir? Your horse, God help my memory, was stolen a fortnight after Intercession last year, and now we're near the end of November."

"Well, what of that?"

The deacon still fingered his beard.

"Why, it follows that more than a year's gone by since then, and your horse was a dapple grey then, just as it is now; in fact, it seems even darker. How's that? Grey horses get a great deal lighter in colour in a year."

Chertopkhanov started... As though someone had driven a dagger into his heart. It was true: the grey colour did change! How was it such a simple reflection had never occurred to him?

"You damned pigtail! Leave me alone!" he yelled suddenly, his eyes flashing with fury, and in a twinkling he disappeared out of the sight of the amazed deacon.

Well, everything was over!

Now, at last, everything was really over, everything was shattered, the last card trumped. Everything crumbled away at once before that word "lighter"!

Grey horses get lighter in colour!

"Gallop, gallop on, accursed brute! You can never gallop away from that!"

Chertopkhanov flew home and again locked himself up.

XII

That this worthless jade was not Malek-Adel; that between him and Malek-Adel there was not the smallest resemblance; that any man of the slightest sense would have seen this from the first minute; that he, Chertopkhanov, had been taken in in the stupidest way—no! that he purposely, of set intent, tricked himself, blinded his own eyes—of all this he had not now the faintest doubt!

Chertopkhanov walked up and down in his room, turning monotonously on his heels at each wall, like a beast in a cage. His vanity suffered intolerably; but he was not only tortured by the sting of wounded vanity; he was overwhelmed by despair, stifled by rage, and burning with the thirst for revenge. But rage against whom? On whom was he to be revenged? On the Jew, Yaff, Masha, the deacon, the Cossack-thief, all his neighbours, the whole world, himself? His mind was giving way. The last card was trumped! (That simile gratified him.) And he was again the most worthless, the most contemptible of men, a common laughing-stock, a motley fool, a damned idiot, an object for jibes—to deacon!... He fancied, he pictured vividly how that loathsome pigtailed priest would tell the story of the grey horse and the foolish gentleman. O damnation! In vain Chertopkhanov tried to check his rising passion, in vain he tried to assure himself that this... horse, though not Malek-Adel, was still... a good horse, and might be of service to him for many years to come; he put this thought away from him at once with fury, as though there were contained in it a new insult to *that* Malek-Adel whom he considered he had wronged... Yes, indeed! This jade, this carrion he, like a blind idiot, had put on a level with him, Malek-Adel! And as to the service the jade could be to him!... As though he would ever deign to get astride of him? Never! On no consideration!... He would sell him to a Tatar for dog's meat—it deserved no better end... Yes, that would be best!

For more than two hours Chertopkhanov paced up and down his room.

"Perfishka!" he called peremptorily all of a sudden. "Run this minute to the tavern; fetch a gallon of vodka! Do you hear? A gallon, and look sharp! I want the vodka this very second here, on the table!"

The vodka was not long in making its appearance on Pantelei Eremeich's table, and he began drinking.

XIII

If anyone had looked at Chertopkhanov then; if anyone could have been a witness of the sullen exasperation with which he drained glass after glass—he would inevitably have felt an involuntary shudder of fear. The night came on, the tallow candle burnt dimly on the table. Chertopkhanov ceased wandering from corner to corner; he sat all flushed, with dull eyes, which he dropped to the floor at one time, at another fixed obstinately on the dark window; he got up, poured out some vodka, drank it off, sat down again, again fixed his eyes on one point, and did not stir—only his breathing grew quicker and his face still more flushed. It seemed as though some resolution were ripening within him, which he was himself ashamed of, but which he was gradually getting used to; one single thought kept obstinately and undeviatingly moving up closer and closer, one single image stood out more and more distinctly, and under the burning weight of heavy drunkenness the angry irritation was replaced by a feeling of ferocity in his heart, and a vindictive smile appeared on his lips.

"Yes, the time has come!" he declared in a matter-of-fact, almost weary tone. "I must get to work."

He drank off the last glass of vodka, took from over his bed the pistol—the very pistol from which he had shot at Masha—loaded it, put some cartridges in his pocket—to be ready for anything—and went round to the stables.

The watchman ran up to him when he began to open the door, but he shouted to him, "It's I! Are you blind? Get out!" The watchman moved a little aside. "Get out and go to bed!" Chertopkhanov shouted at him again: "There's nothing for you to guard here! A mighty wonder, a treasure indeed to watch over!" He went into the stable. Malek-Adel... the spurious Malek-Adel, was lying on his litter. Chertopkhanov gave him a kick, saying, "Get up, you brute!" Then he unhooked a halter from a nail, took off the horse-cloth and flung it on the ground, and roughly turning the submissive horse round in the box, led it out into the courtyard, and from the yard into the open country, to the great amazement of the watchman, who could not make out at all where the master was going off by night, leading an unsaddled horse. He was, of course, afraid to question him, and only followed him with his eyes till he disappeared at the bend in the road leading to a neighbouring wood.

XIV

Chertopkhanov walked with long strides, not stopping nor looking round. Malek-Adel—we will call him by that name to the end—followed him meekly. It was a rather clear night; Chertopkhanov could make out the jagged outline of the forest, which formed a black mass in front of him. Out in the chill night air, he would certainly have been hit by the vodka he had drunk, if it had not been for another, stronger intoxication, which completely overmastered him. His head was heavy, his blood thudded in his throat and ears, but he went on steadily, and knew where he was going.

He had made up his mind to kill Malek-Adel; he had thought of nothing else the whole day. Now he had made up his mind!

He resolved to do this thing—if not calmly, then confidently, unhesitatingly, as a man driven by a sense of duty. This “job” seemed a very “simple” thing to him; in making an end of the impostor, he would be quits with “everyone” at once—he would punish himself for his stupidity, and make expiation to his real darling, and he would show the whole world (Chertopkhanov worried a great deal about the “whole world”) that he was not to be trifled with. And, above all, he would make an end of himself, too, with the impostor—for what had he to live for now? How all this took shape in his brain, and why it seemed to him so simple—it is not easy to explain, though not altogether impossible; stung to the quick, solitary, without a human soul near to him, without a kopeck, and with his blood on fire with vodka, he was in a state bordering on madness, and there is no doubt that even in the most absurd freaks of mad people there is, to their eyes, a sort of logic, and even justice. Of his justice Chertopkhanov was, at any rate, fully persuaded; he did not hesitate, he made haste to carry out the sentence he had passed on the guilty, without giving himself any clear definition of whom he meant by that term. To tell the truth, he reflected very little on what he was about to do. “I must, I must make an end,” was what he kept stubbornly and severely repeating to himself, “I must make an end!”

And the guiltless guilty one followed at a submissive trot behind his back. But there was no pity for him in Chertopkhanov’s heart.

XV

Not far from the forest to which he had led his horse there stretched a small ravine, half overgrown with young oak bushes. Chertopkhanov went down into it. Malek-Adel stumbled and almost fell on him.

"So you would crush me, would you, you damned brute!" shouted Chertopkhanov, and, as though in self-defence, he pulled the pistol out of his pocket. He no longer felt furious exasperation, but that special numbness of the senses which they say comes over a man before the perpetration of a crime. But his own voice terrified him—it sounded so wild and strange under the cover of dark branches in the close, decaying dampness of the forest ravine? Moreover, in response to his exclamation, some great bird suddenly fluttered in a tree-top above his head... Chertopkhanov shuddered. He had, as it were, roused a witness to his act—and where? In that silent place where he should have met no living creature.

"Away with you, devil, to the four winds of heaven!" he muttered, and letting go Malek-Adel's halter, he gave him a violent blow on the shoulder with the butt end of the pistol. Malek-Adel promptly turned back, clambered out of the ravine... and trotted away. But the thud of his hoofs was not long audible. The rising wind confused and blended all sounds together.

Chertopkhanov, too, slowly clambered out of the ravine, reached the edge of the forest, and made his way along the road homewards. He was displeased with himself; the weight in his head and his heart had spread over all his limbs; he walked angry, gloomy, dissatisfied, hungry, and felt as though someone had insulted him, snatched his prey, his food from him...

The suicide, baffled in his intent, must know such sensations.

Suddenly something poked him between his shoulder-blades. He looked round. Malek-Adel was standing in the middle of the road. He had walked after his master; he touched him with his nose to announce himself.

"Ah!" shouted Chertopkhanov. "Of yourself, of yourself you have come for your death! So, there!"

In the twinkling of an eye he had snatched out his pistol, drawn the trigger, turned the muzzle on Malek-Adel's brow, fired...

The poor horse sprang aside, rose on its haunches, bounded ten

paces away, and suddenly fell heavily, and gasped as it writhed upon the ground.

Chertopkhanov put his two hands over his ears and ran away. His knees were shaking under him. Drunkenness and fury and blind self-confidence—all had left him at once! There was left nothing but a sense of shame and loathing—and the consciousness, unmistakable, that this time he had put an end to himself, too.

XVI

Six weeks later, the groom Perfishka thought it his duty to stop the commissioner of police as he happened to be passing Bessonovo.

"What do you want?" inquired the guardian of order.

"If you please, Your Excellency, come into our house," answered the groom with a low bow. "Pantelei Ereimeich, I fancy, is about to die; and I'm afraid."

"What? Die?" queried the commissioner.

"Yes, sir. First, his honour drank vodka every day, and now he's taken to his bed and got very thin. I fancy his honour does not understand anything now. He's lost his tongue completely."

The commissioner got out of his trap.

"Have you sent for the priest, at least? Has your master been confessed? Taken the sacrament?"

"No, sir!"

The commissioner frowned. "How is that, my boy? How can that be—hey? Don't you know that for that... you're liable to have to answer heavily—hey?"

"Indeed, and I did ask him the day before yesterday, and yesterday again," protested the intimidated groom. "'Wouldn't you, Pantelei Ereimeich,' says I, 'let me run for the priest, sir?' 'You hold your tongue, idiot,' says he, 'mind your own business.' But today, when I asked him, his honour only looked at me and twitched his moustache."

"And has he been drinking a great deal of vodka?" inquired the commissioner.

"Rather! But if you would be so good, your honour, come into his room."

"Well, lead the way!" grumbled the commissioner, and he followed Perfishka.

An astounding sight was in store for him. In a damp, dark back-room, on a wretched bedstead covered with a horse-cloth, with a rough felt cloak for a pillow, lay Chertopkhanov. He was not pale now, but yellowish-green, like a corpse, with sunken eyes under leaden lids and a sharp, pinched nose—still reddish—above his dishevelled whiskers. He lay dressed in his invariable Caucasian coat, with the cartridge pockets on the breast, and blue Circassian trousers. A Cossack cap with a crimson crown covered his forehead to his very eyebrows. In one hand Chertopkhanov held his hunting whip, in the other an embroidered tobacco pouch—Masha's last gift to him. On a table near the bed stood an empty spirit bottle, and at the head of the bed were two water-colour sketches pinned to the wall; one represented, as far as could be made out, a fat man with a guitar in his hand—probably Nedopyuskin; the other portrayed a horseman galloping at full speed. The horse was like those fabulous animals which are sketched by children on walls and fences; but the carefully washed-in dappling of the horse's grey coat, and the cartridge pockets on the rider's breast, the pointed toes of his boots, and the immense moustaches, left no room for doubt—this sketch was meant to represent Pantelei Ereimeich riding Malek-Adel.

The astonished commissioner of police did not know how to proceed. The silence of death reigned in the room. "Why, he's dead already!" he thought, and raising his voice, he said, "Pantelei Ereimeich! Eh, Pantelei Ereimeich!"

Then something extraordinary occurred. Chertopkhanov's eyelids slowly opened, the dim eyes moved first from right to left, then from left to right, rested on the commissioner—saw him... Something gleamed in their dull whiteness, the semblance of a flash came back to them, the blue lips were gradually unglued, and a hoarse, almost sepulchral voice was heard.

"Pantelei Ereimeich of the ancient hereditary nobility is dying: who can hinder him? He owes no man anything, asks nothing from anyone... Leave him, people! Go!"

The hand holding the whip tried to lift it... In vain! The lips cleaved together again, the eyes closed, and as before Chertopkhanov lay on his comfortless bed, flat as an empty sack, and his feet close together.

"Let me know when he dies," the commissioner whispered to Perfishka as he went out of the room, "and I suppose you can send

for the priest now. You must observe due order; give him extreme unction."

Perfishka went that same day for the priest, and the following morning he let the commissioner know: Pantelei Ereimeich had died in the night.

When they buried him, two men followed his coffin: the groom Perfishka and Moshel Leyba. The news of Chertopkhanov's death had somehow reached the Jew, and he did not fail to pay his last respects to his benefactor.

A LIVING RELIC

*O native land of long suffering,
Land of the Russian people!*

F. TYUTCHEV

A French proverb says that "a dry fisherman and a wet hunter are a sorry sight". Never having had any taste for fishing, I cannot decide what are the fisherman's feelings in fine bright weather, and how far in bad weather the pleasure derived from the abundance of catch compensates for the unpleasantness of being wet. But for the sportsman rain is a real calamity. It was to just this calamity that Ermolai and I were exposed on one of our expeditions after grouse in the Belev Uyezd. The rain never ceased from early morning. What didn't we do to escape it? We put mackintosh capes almost right over our heads, and stood under the trees to avoid the raindrops. The waterproof capes, to say nothing of their hindering our shooting, let the water through in the most shameless fashion; and under the trees, though at first, certainly, the rain did not reach us, afterwards the water collected on the leaves suddenly broke through, every branch gushed down on us like a waterspout, a chill stream made its way under our neck-ties and trickled down our spines... This was "the limit," as Ermolai expressed it. "No, Pyotr Petrovich," he cried at last, "we can't go on like this. There's no shooting today. The dogs' scent is drowned. The guns miss fire... Pshaw! What a mess!"

"What's to be done?" I queried.

"Well, let's go to Alexeyevka. You don't know it, perhaps—there's a hamlet of that name belonging to your mother; it's eight versts from here. We'll stay the night there, and tomorrow..."

"Come back here?"

"No, not here. I know of some places beyond Alexeyevka... ever so much better than here for grouse!"

I did not proceed to question my faithful companion why he had not taken me to those parts before, and the same day we made our way to my mother's hamlet, the existence of which, I must confess,

I had not even suspected up till then. At this hamlet, it turned out, there was a little lodge. It was very old, but, as it had not been inhabited, it was clean; I passed a fairly tranquil night in it.

The next day I woke up very early. The sun had only just risen; there was not a single cloud in the sky; everything around shone with a double brilliance—the brightness of the fresh morning rays and of yesterday's downpour. While they were harnessing me a cart, I went for a stroll about a small orchard, now neglected and run wild, which enclosed the little lodge on all sides with its fragrant, sappy growth. Ah, how sweet it was in the open air, under the bright sky, where the larks were trilling, whence their bell-like notes rained down like silvery beads! On their wings, doubtless, they had carried off drops of dew, and their songs seemed steeped in dew. I took my cap off my head and drew glad deep breaths. On the slope of a shallow ravine, close to the fence, could be seen a bee-garden; a narrow path led to it, winding like a snake between tall walls of high grass and nettles, above which struggled up, God knows whence brought, the pointed stalks of dark-green hemp.

I went along this path and soon reached the bee-garden. Beside them stood a little wattled shanty, where they put the beehives for the winter. I peeped into the half-open door; it was dark, still, dry within; there was a scent of mint and balm. In the corner was a trestle-bed fitted together, and on it, covered with a quilt, a little figure of some sort. I started walking away...

"Master, master! Pyotr Petrovich!" I heard a voice, faint, slow and hoarse, like the whispering of marsh rushes.

I stopped.

"Pyotr Petrovich! Come in, please!" the voice repeated. It came from the corner where was the trestle-bed I had noticed.

I drew near, and was struck dumb with amazement. Before me lay a living human being; but what sort of a creature was it?

A head utterly withered, of a uniform coppery hue—like some very ancient ikon; a sharp nose like a keen-edged knife; the lips could barely be seen—only the teeth flashed white and the eyes; and from under the kerchief some thin wisps of yellow hair straggled on to the forehead. At the chin, where the quilt was folded, two tiny hands of the same coppery hue were moving, the fingers slowly twitching like little sticks. I looked more intently: the face, far from being ugly, was positively beautiful, but strange and dreadful; and the face seemed the more dreadful to me that on it—on its metallic

cheeks—I saw, struggling . . . struggling, and unable to form itself—a smile.

"You don't recognise me, master?" whispered the voice again; it seemed to be breathed from the almost unmoving lips. "And, indeed, how should you? I'm Lukerya . . . Do you remember, who used to lead the dance at your mother's, at Spasskoye? . . . Do you remember, I used to be leader of the chorus, too?"

"Lukerya!" I cried. "Is it you? Can it be?"

"Yes, it's I, master—I am Lukerya."

I did not know what to say, and stared in stupefaction at the dark motionless face with the clear, deathlike eyes fastened upon me. Was it possible? This mummy, Lukerya—the greatest beauty in all our household—that tall, plump, pink-and-white, singing, laughing, dancing creature! Lukerya, our smart Lukerya, whom all our lads were courting, for whom I, too, heaved some secret sighs—I, a boy of sixteen!

"Mercy, Lukerya!" I said at last. "What is it has happened to you?"

"Oh, such a misfortune befell me! But don't mind me, sir; don't let my trouble revolt you; sit there on that little tub—a little nearer, or you won't be able to hear me. I've not much of a voice nowadays! . . . Well, I am glad to see you! What brought you to Alexeyevka?"

Lukerya spoke very softly and feebly, but without pausing.

"Ermolai, the huntsman, brought me here. But you tell me . . ."

"Tell you about my trouble? Certainly, sir. It happened to me a long while ago now—six or seven years. I had only just been betrothed then to Vassily Polyakov—do you remember, such a fine-looking fellow he was, with curly hair?—he waited at table at your mother's. But you weren't in the country then; you had gone away to Moscow to your studies. We were very much in love, Vassily and me; I could never get him out of my head; and it was in the spring it all happened. Well, one night . . . not long before sunrise, it was . . . I couldn't sleep; a nightingale in the garden was singing so wonderfully sweet! . . . I could not help getting up and going out on to the steps to listen. It trilled and trilled . . . and all at once I fancied someone called me; it seemed like Vassily's voice, so softly, 'Lukerya dear! . . .' I stepped forward, and being half asleep, I suppose, I missed my footing and fell straight down from the top step, and flop on to the ground! And I thought I wasn't much hurt, for I got up directly and went back to

my room. Only it seems something inside me—in my body—snapped. Let me get my breath . . . half a minute . . . sir."

Lukerya ceased, and I looked at her in amazement. What amazed me particularly was that she told her story almost cheerfully, without sighs and groans, not complaining nor asking for sympathy.

"Ever since that happened," Lukerya went on, "I began to pine away and get thin; my skin got dark; walking was difficult for me; and then—I lost the use of my legs altogether; I couldn't stand or sit; I had to lie down all the time. And I didn't care to eat or drink; I got worse and worse. Your mamma, in the kindness of her heart, made me see doctors, and sent me to a hospital. But there was no curing me. And not one doctor could even say what my illness was. What didn't they do to me?—they burnt my spine with hot irons, they put me in lumps of ice, and it was all no good. I got quite numb in the end . . . So the mistress decided it was no use doctoring me any more, and there was no sense in keeping cripples up at the great house . . . well, and so they sent me here—because I've relations here. So here I live, as you see."

Lukerya was silent again, and again she tried to smile.

"But this is awful—your position!" I cried. And not knowing how to go on, I asked, "And what of Vassily Polyakov?" A most stupid question it was.

Lukerya turned her eyes a little away.

"What of Polyakov? He grieved—he grieved for a bit—and then he married another, a girl from Glinnoye. Do you know Glinnoye? It's not far from us. Her name's Agrafena. He loved me dearly—but, you see, he's a young man; he couldn't stay a bachelor. And what sort of a helpmeet could I be? The wife he found for himself is a good, kind woman—and they have children. He lives here; he's a clerk at a neighbour's; your mamma let him go off with a passport, and he's doing very well, praise God."

"And so you go on lying here all the time?" I asked again.

"Yes, sir, I've been lying here seven years. In the summertime I lie here in this shanty, and when it gets cold they move me out into the bath-house: I lie there."

"Who waits on you? Does anyone look after you?"

"Oh, there are kind folks here as everywhere; they don't desert me. And I don't need much caring. I eat nothing to speak of; but water is here, in the pitcher; it's always kept full of pure spring water. I can reach to the pitcher myself: I have one arm still of use. There's

a little girl here, an orphan; now and then she comes to see me, the kind child. She was here just now . . . You didn't meet her? Such a pretty, fair little thing. She brings me flowers. I'm ever so fond of flowers. We've no flowers in the garden—there used to be, but they've all disappeared. But, you know, wild flowers, too, are nice; they smell even sweeter than garden flowers. Lilies of the valley, now—what could be sweeter?"

"And aren't you dull and miserable, my poor Lukerya?"

"Why, what is one to do? To be frank, at first it was very wearisome; but later on I got used to it; it's not so bad, there are others worse off still."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, some haven't a roof to shelter them, and there are some blind or deaf; while I, thank God, have splendid sight, and hear everything—everything. If a mole burrows in the ground—I hear even that. And I can smell every scent, even the faintest! When the buckwheat comes into flower in the meadow, or the lime-trees in the garden—I don't need to be told of it; I'm the first to know. It only needs the least bit of a wind blowing from that quarter. No, I don't complain, many are far worse off than me. Look at this, again: anyone in health may easily fall into sin; but I'm cut off even from sin. The other day, father Alexei, the priest, came to give me the sacrament, and he says: 'There's no need,' says he, 'to confess you; you can't fall into sin in your condition, can you?' But I said to him, 'How about sinning in thought, father?' 'Ah, well,' says he, and he laughed, 'that's no great sin.'

"But I fancy I'm no great sinner even in that way, in thought," Lukerya went on, "for I've trained myself not to think, and above all, not to remember. The time goes faster."

I must own I was astonished. "You're always alone, Lukerya: how can you prevent the thoughts from coming into your head? Or are you asleep all the time?"

"Oh, no, sir! I can't always sleep. Though I've no great pain, still I've an ache, there, right inside, and in my bones, too; it won't let me sleep as I ought. No . . . but there, I lie here and don't think; I feel that I'm alive, I breathe; and that is all I need. I look and listen. The bees buzz and hum in the hive; a dove sits on the roof and coos; a hen comes along with her chickens to peck up crumbs; or a sparrow flies in, or a butterfly—that's a great treat for me. Last year some swallows even built a nest over there in the corner, and brought up

their little ones. Oh, how interesting it was! One would fly to the nest, press close, feed the young ones, and off again. Look again: the other would be in her place already. Sometimes it wouldn't fly in, but only fly past the open door; and the little ones would begin to squeak and open their beaks directly... I was hoping for them back again the next year, but they say a hunter here shot them with his gun. And what could he gain by it? It's hardly bigger than a beetle, the swallow... What wicked men you are, you hunters!"

"I don't shoot swallows," I hastened to remark.

"And once," Lukerya began again, "it was comical, really. A hare ran in, it did really! The hounds, I suppose, were after it; anyway, it seemed to tumble straight in at the door!... It squatted quite near me, and sat so a long while; it kept sniffing with its nose, and twitching its whiskers—like a regular officer! And it looked at me. It understood, to be sure, that I was no danger to it. At last it got up, went hop-hop to the door, looked round in the doorway, and vanished in a twinkling. Such a funny fellow it was!"

Lukerya glanced at me, as much as to say, "Wasn't it funny?" To satisfy her, I laughed. She moistened her parched lips.

"Well, in the winter, of course, I'm worse off, because it's dark; to burn a candle would be a pity, and what would be the use? I can read, to be sure, and was always fond of reading, but what could I read? There are no books of any kind, and even if there were, how could I hold a book? Father Alexei brought me a calendar to entertain me, but he saw it was no good, so he carried it away again. But even though it's dark, there's always something to listen to: a cricket chirps, or a mouse begins scratching somewhere. That's when it's a good thing not to think!...

"And I repeat the prayers, too," Lukerya went on after taking breath, "only I don't know many of them—the prayers, I mean. And besides, why should I weary the Lord God? What can I ask Him for? He knows better than I what I need. He has laid a cross upon me: that means that He loves me. So we are commanded to understand. I repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Hymn to the Virgin, the Supplication of all the Afflicted, and I lie still again, without any thought at all, and I am all right!"

Two minutes passed by. I did not break the silence, and did not stir on the narrow tub which served me as a seat. The cruel stony stillness of the living, unfortunate creature lying before me communicated itself to me; I, too, turned, as it were, numb.

"Listen, Lukerya," I began at last, "listen to the suggestion I'm going to make to you. Would you like me to arrange for them to take you to a hospital—a good hospital in the town? Who knows, perhaps you might yet be cured; at any rate, you would not be alone."

Lukerya's eyebrows fluttered faintly. "Oh, no, sir," she answered in a troubled whisper, "don't move me into a hospital; don't touch me. I shall only have more agony to bear there! How could they cure me now? Why, there was a doctor came here once; he wanted to examine me. I begged him, for Christ's sake, not to disturb me. It was no use. He began turning me over, pounding my hands and legs, and pulling me about. He said, 'I'm doing this for Science; I'm a servant of Science—a scientific man! And you,' he said, 'really oughtn't to oppose me, because I've a medal given me for my labours, and it's for you simpletons I'm toiling.' He mauled me about, told me the name of my disease—some wonderful long name—and with that he went away; and all my poor bones ached for a week after. You say I'm all alone, always alone. Oh, no, not always; they come to see me—I'm quiet—I don't bother them. The peasant girls come in and chat a bit; a pilgrim woman will wander in and tell me tales of Jerusalem, of Kiev, of the holy towns. And I'm not afraid of being alone. Indeed, it's better! Master, don't touch me, don't take me to the hospital... Thank you, you are kind; only don't touch me, there's a dear!"

"Well, as you like, as you like, Lukerya. You know, I only suggested it for your good."

"I know, master, that it was for my good. But, master dear, who can help another? Who can enter into his soul? Every man must help himself! You won't believe me, perhaps, but I lie here sometimes so alone... and it's as though there were no one else in the world but me. As if I alone were living! And it seems to me as though something were blessing me... I'm carried away by dreams that are really marvellous!"

"What do you dream of, then, Lukerya?"

"That, too, master, I couldn't say; one can't explain. Besides, I forget afterwards. It's like a cloud coming over and bursting, then it grows so fresh and sweet; but just what it was, there's no knowing! Only I imagine if folks were near me, I should have nothing of that, and should feel nothing except my misfortune."

Lukerya heaved a painful sigh. Her breathing, like her limbs, was not under her control.

"I can see, master," she began again, "you are very sorry for me. But you mustn't be too sorry, really! I'll tell you one thing, for instance, I sometimes, even now... Do you remember how merry I used to be in my time? A regular madcap!... So do you know what? I sing songs even now."

"Sing?... You?"

"Yes; I sing the old songs, songs for games, for feasts, Christmas songs, all sorts! I know such a lot of them, you see, and I've not forgotten them. Only dance songs I don't sing. In my state now, it wouldn't suit me."

"How do you sing them?... To yourself?"

"To myself, yes; and aloud, too. I can't sing loud, but still one can understand it. I told you a little girl waits on me. A clever little orphan she is. So I have taught her; four songs she has learnt from me already. Don't you believe me? Wait a minute, I'll show you..."

Lukerya took breath... The thought that this half-dead creature was making ready to sing raised an involuntary feeling of dread in me. But before I could utter a word, a long drawn-out, hardly audible, but pure and true note, was quivering in my ears... it was followed by a second and a third. "In the meadows," sang Lukerya. She sang, the expression of her stony face unchanged, even her eyes riveted on one spot. But how touchingly tinkled out that poor struggling little voice, that wavered like a thread of smoke, how she longed to pour out all her soul in it!... I felt no dread now; my heart was wrung with unutterable pity.

"Ah, I can't!" she said suddenly. "I've not the strength. I'm so upset with joy at seeing you."

She closed her eyes.

I laid my hand on her tiny chill fingers... She glanced at me, and her dark lids, fringed with golden eyelashes, closed again, and were still as an ancient statue's. An instant later they glistened in the half-darkness... They were moistened by a tear.

As before, I did not stir.

"How silly I am!" said Lukerya suddenly, with unexpected force, and opened her eyes wide: she tried to wink the tears out of them. "I ought to be ashamed! What am I doing? It's a long time since I have been like this... not since that day when Vasya Polyakov was here last spring. While he sat with me and talked, I was all right; but when he had gone away, how I did cry in my loneliness! Where did I get the tears from? But, there! We girls get our tears for nothing.

Master," added Lukerya, "perhaps you have a handkerchief . . . If you don't mind, wipe my eyes, please."

I made haste to carry out her desire, and left her the handkerchief. She refused it at first . . . "What good's such a gift to me?" she said. The handkerchief was plain enough, but clean and white. Afterwards she clutched it in her weak fingers and did not loosen them again. As I got used to the darkness in which we both were, I could clearly make out her features, could even perceive the delicate flush that peeped out under the coppery hue of her face, could discover in the face, so at least it seemed to me, traces of its former beauty.

"You asked me, master," Lukerya began again, "whether I sleep. I sleep very little, but every time I fall asleep I've dreams—such splendid dreams! I'm never ill in my dreams; I'm always so well, and young . . . There's one thing's sad: I wake up and long for a good stretch, and I'm all as if I were in chains. I once had such a lovely dream! Shall I tell it you? Well, listen. I dreamt I was standing in a meadow, and all round me was rye, so tall, and ripe, as gold! . . . And I had a reddish dog with me—such a wicked dog; it kept trying to bite me. And I had a sickle in my hands; not a simple sickle; it seemed to be the moon itself—the crescent moon as it is when it's the shape of a sickle. And with this same moon I had to cut the rye clean. Only I was very weary with the heat, and the moon blinded me, and I felt lazy; and corn-flowers were growing all about, and such big ones! And they all turned their heads to me. And I thought in my dream I would pick them; Vasya had promised to come, so I'd pick myself a wreath first; I'd still time to reap. I began picking corn-flowers, but they kept melting away from between my fingers, do what I would. And I couldn't make myself a wreath. And meanwhile I heard someone coming up to me, so close, and calling, 'Lukerya! Lukerya! . . . ' 'Ah,' I thought, 'what a pity I hadn't time! No matter, I shall put that moon on my head instead of corn-flowers.' I put it on like a *kokoshnik*, and I was all brightness directly and I made the whole field light around me. And, behold! Over the very top of the ears there came gliding very quickly towards me, not Vasya, but Christ Himself! And how I knew it was Christ I can't say; they don't paint Him like that—only it was He! No beard, tall, young, all in white, only His belt was golden; and He held out His hand to me. 'Fear not,' said He. 'My bride adorned, follow Me; you shall lead the choral dance in the heavenly kingdom, and sing the songs of Paradise.' And how I clung to His hand! My dog at once snapped at my heels . . . but then we

began to float upwards! He in front... His wings spread wide over all the sky, long like a sea-gull's—and I after Him! And my dog had to stay behind. Then only I understood that that dog was my illness, and that in the heavenly kingdom there was no place for it."

Lukerya paused a minute.

"And I had another dream, too," she began again, "but maybe it was a vision. I really don't know. It seemed to me I was lying in this very shanty, and my dead parents, father and mother, come to me and bow low to me, but say nothing. And I asked them, 'Why do you bow down to me, father and mother?' 'Because,' they said, 'you suffer much in this world, so that you have not only set free your own soul, but have taken a great burden from off us, too. And for us in the other world it has become much easier. You have made an end of your own sins; now you are expiating our sins.' And having said this, my parents bowed down to me again, and I could not see them any more; there was nothing but the walls. I was in great doubt afterwards what had happened to me. I even told the priest of it in confession. Only he thinks it was not a vision, because visions come only to the clerical gentry.

"And I'll tell you another dream," Lukerya went on. "I dreamt I was sitting on the highroad, under a willow; I had a stick, had a bundle on my shoulders, and my head tied up in a kerchief, a pilgrim woman I was! And I had to go somewhere, a long, long way off, on a pilgrimage. And pilgrims kept coming past me; they came along slowly, all going one way; their faces were weary, and all very much like one another. And I dreamt that moving about among them was a woman, a head taller than the rest, and wearing a peculiar dress, not like ours—not Russian. And her face, too, was peculiar—a worn face and severe. And all the others moved away from her; but she suddenly turns and comes straight to me. She stood still and looked at me; and her eyes were yellow, and large as a falcon's, and so very clear. And I asked her, 'Who are you?' And she says to me, 'I'm your death.' Instead of being frightened, it was quite the other way. I was as pleased as could be; I crossed myself! And the woman—my death—says to me, 'I'm sorry for you, Lukerya, but I can't take you with me. Farewell!' Good God! How sad I was then!... 'Take me,' said I, 'good mother, take me, dear!' And my death turned to me, and began speaking to me... I knew that she was appointing me my hour, but indistinctly, incomprehensibly. 'After St. Peter's day,' said she... With that I awoke... Yes, I have such wonderful dreams!"

Lukerya turned her eyes upwards and sank into thought.

"Only the sad thing is, sometimes a whole week will go by without my getting to sleep once. Last year a lady came to see me, and she gave me a little bottle of medicine against sleeplessness; she told me to take ten drops at a time. It did me so much good, and I could sleep; only the bottle was all finished long ago. Do you know what medicine that was, and how to get it?"

The lady had obviously given Lukerya opium. I promised to get her another bottle like it, and could not refrain from again wondering aloud at her patience.

"Ah, master!" she answered. "Why do you say so? What patience is this? There, Simeon Stylites now had patience certainly, great patience; for thirty years he stood on a pillar! And another saint had himself buried in the earth, right up to his breast, and the ants ate his face . . . And I'll tell you what I was told by a student of the Bible: there was once a country, and the Moslems made war on it, and they tortured and killed all the inhabitants; and do what they would, the people could not get rid of them. And there appeared among these people a holy virgin; she took a great sword, put on armour weighing eighty pounds, went out against the Moslems and drove them all beyond the sea. Only when she had driven them out, she said to them, 'Now burn me, for that was my vow, that I would die a death by fire for my people.' And the Moslems took her and burnt her, and the people have been free ever since then! That was a noble deed, now! But what am I!"

I wondered to myself at the legend of Joan of Arc reaching her in this shape, and after a brief silence, I asked Lukerya how old she was.

"Twenty-eight . . . or nine . . . It won't be thirty. But why count the years! I've something else to tell you . . ."

Lukerya suddenly gave a sort of choked cough and groaned.

"You are talking a great deal," I observed to her, "it may be bad for you."

"It's true," she whispered, hardly audibly, "it's time to end our talk; but what does it matter! Now, when you leave me, I can be silent as long as I like. Anyway, I've opened my heart . . ."

I began bidding her good-bye. I repeated my promise to send her the medicine and asked her once more to think well and tell me if there wasn't anything she wanted?

"I want nothing; I am content with all, thank God!" she articulated

with very great effort, but with emotion. "God give good health to all! But there, master, you might speak a word to your mamma—the peasants here are poor—if she could take the least bit off their rent! They've not land enough, and no woods, nothing . . . They would pray to God for you . . . But I want nothing; I'm quite content with all.

I gave Lukerya my word that I would carry out her request, and had already walked to the door when she called me back again.

"Do you remember, master," she said, and there was a wonderful gleam in her eyes and on her lips, "what a braid I used to have? Do you remember, right down to my knees! It was long before I could make up my mind to it . . . Such hair as it was! But how could it be kept combed? In my state! . . . So I had it cut off . . . Yes . . . Well, good-bye, master! I can't talk any more . . ."

That day, before setting off to shoot, I had a conversation with the village constable about Lukerya. I learnt from him that in the village they called Lukerya the "Living Relic"; that she gave them no trouble, however: they never heard complaint or repining from her. "She asks nothing, but, on the contrary, she's grateful for everything; a gentle soul, one must say, if any there be. Stricken by God," so the constable concluded, "for her sins, one must suppose; but we do not go into that. And as for judging her, no—no, we do not judge her. Let her be!"

A few weeks later I heard that Lukerya was dead. So her death had come for her . . . and "after St. Peter's day". They told me that on the day of her death she kept hearing the sound of bells, though it was reckoned over five miles from Alexeyevka to the church, and it was a week-day. Lukerya, however, had said that the sounds came not from the church, but from above! Probably she did not dare to say—from heaven.

WHEELS ARE RATTLING

"I've something to tell you, sir," observed Ermolai, coming into the hut to see me. I had just had dinner, and was lying down on a travelling bed to rest a little after a fairly successful but fatiguing day of grouse-shooting—it was somewhere about the 10th of July, and the heat was terrible. "I've something to tell you: all our shot's gone."

I jumped off the bed.

"All gone? How's that? Why, we took pretty nearly thirty pounds with us from the village—a whole bag!"

"That's so; and a big bag it was: enough for a fortnight. But there's no knowing! There must have been a hole in it, or something; anyway, there's no shot . . . that's to say, there's hardly enough for ten charges left."

"What are we to do now? The very best places are before us—we're promised six coveys for tomorrow . . ."

"Well, send me to Tula. It's not so far from here; only forty-five versts. I'll fly like the wind, and bring all of forty pounds of shot if you say the word."

"But when would you go?"

"Why, directly. Why put it off? Only, I say, we shall have to hire horses."

"Why hire horses? Why not our own?"

"Our own would not do. The shaft-horse has gone lame . . . pretty bad!"

"Since when's that?"

"Well, the other day, the coachman took him to be shod. So he was shod, and the blacksmith, I suppose, was clumsy. Now, he can't even step on the hoof. It's a front leg. He lifts it up, like a dog."

"Well? they've taken the shoe off, at least?"

"No, they've not; but, of course, they ought to take it off. A nail's been driven right into the flesh, I should say."

I ordered the coachman to be summoned. It turned out that Ermolai had spoken the truth: the shaft-horse really could not put its weight on the hoof. I promptly gave orders to have the shoe taken off, and for the horse to be stood on damp clay.

"Then do you wish me to hire horses to go to Tula?" Ermolai persisted.

"Do you suppose we can get horses in this wilderness?" I exclaimed with involuntary irritation.

The village in which we found ourselves was a desolate, God-forsaken place; all its inhabitants seemed to be poverty-stricken; we had difficulty in discovering one hut, moderately roomy, and even that one had no chimney.

"Yes," replied Ermolai with his habitual equanimity. "What you said about this village is true enough; but there used to live in this very place one peasant—a very clever fellow! rich, too! He had nine horses. He's dead, and his eldest son manages it all now. The man's a perfect fool, but still he's not had time to waste his father's wealth yet. We can get horses from him. If you say the word, I will fetch him. His brothers, I've heard say, are smart chaps, but still, he's their head."

"Why so?"

"Because he's the eldest! Of course, the younger ones must obey!" Here Ermolai, in reference to younger brothers as a class, expressed himself with a vigour quite unsuitable for print. "I'll fetch him. He's a simple fellow. With him you can't fail to come to terms."

While Ermolai went after his "simple fellow" the idea occurred to me that it might be better for me to drive to Tula myself. In the first place, taught by experience, I had no very great confidence in Ermolai: I had once sent him to town for purchases; he had promised to get through all my commissions in one day, and was gone a whole week, drank up all the money, and came back on foot, though he had set off in my droshky. And, secondly, I had an acquaintance in Tula, a horse-dealer; I might buy a horse off him to take the place of the disabled shaft-horse.

"The thing's decided!" I thought. "I'll drive over myself; I can sleep just as well on the road—luckily, the coach is comfortable."

"I've brought him!" cried Ermolai, entering the hut a quarter of an hour later. He was followed by a tall peasant in a white shirt, blue breeches, and bast shoes, with white eyebrows and short-sighted eyes, a wedge-shaped red beard, a long swollen nose, and a gaping mouth. He certainly did look "simple".

"Here, your honour," observed Ermolai, "he has horses—and he's willing."

"So be, surely, I..." the peasant began hesitatingly in a rather hoarse voice, shaking his thin hair and drumming with his fingers on the band of the cap he held in his hands, "that is, I..."

"What's your name?" I inquired.

The peasant looked down and seemed to think deeply.

"My name?"

"Yes; what are you called?"

"Why, my name'll be—Filofei."

"Well, then, friend Filofei, I hear you have horses. Bring a team of three here—we'll put them in my coach—it's light one—and you drive me in to Tula. There's a moon now at night; it's light, and it's cool for driving. What sort of a road have you here?"

"The road? There's naught amiss with the road. To the main road it will be twenty versts—not more... There's one little place... a bit queer; but naught amiss else."

"What sort of little place is it that's queer?"

"Well, we'll have to cross the river by the ford."

"But are you thinking of going to Tula yourself?" inquired Ermolai.

"Yes."

"Oh!" commented my faithful servant with a shake of his head.

"Oh-oh!" he repeated; then he spat on the floor and walked out of the room.

The expedition to Tula obviously no longer presented any features of interest to him; it had become for him a dull and unattractive business.

"Do you know the road well?" I said, addressing Filofei.

"Surely we know the road! Only, so to say, please your honour, I can't... so on the sudden, so to say..."

It appeared that Ermolai, on engaging Filofei, had assured him that, fool as he was, he'd be paid... and nothing more! Filofei, fool as he was—in Ermolai's words—was not satisfied with this statement alone. He demanded of me fifty rubles—an exorbitant price; I offered him

ten—a low price. We fell to haggling; Filofei at first was stubborn; then he began to come down, but slowly. Ermolai entering for an instant told me that “the fool”—(He’s fond of the word, seemingly!)—Filofei remarked in a low voice)—“the fool can’t reckon money at all,” and reminded me how twenty years ago a posting tavern established by my mother at the crossing of two highroads came to grief because the old house-serf who was put there to manage it positively did not understand reckoning money, but valued sums simply by the number of coins—in fact, gave silver coins in exchange for copper, though he would swear furiously all the time.

“Ugh, you Filofei! You’re a regular Filofei!” Ermolai jeered at last—and he went out slamming the door angrily.

Filofei made him no reply, as though admitting that to be called Filofei was, in fact, not very clever of him, and that a man might fairly be reproached for such a name, though really the village priest was to blame in the matter, who had not been properly oiled at the christening.

At last we agreed, however, on the sum of twenty rubles. He went off for the horses, and an hour later brought five for me to choose from. The horses turned out to be fairly good, though their manes and tails were tangled, and their bellies round and taut as drums. With Filofei came two of his brothers, not in the least like him. Little, black-eyed, sharp-nosed fellows, they certainly produced the impression of “smart chaps”; they talked a great deal, very fast—“clacked away”, as Ermolai expressed it—but obeyed the elder brother.

They dragged the coach out of the shed and were busy about it and the horses for an hour and a half; first they let out the traces, then pulled them tight again! Both brothers were very much set on harnessing the “roan” in the shafts, because “him can do best going downhill”; but Filofei decided for “the shaggy one”. So the shaggy one was put in the shafts accordingly.

They heaped the coach up with hay, put the collar of the lame shaft-horse under the seat, in case we might want to fit it on to the horse to be bought in Tula... Filofei, who had run home and come back in a long, white, loose, ancestral overcoat, a high sugar-loaf cap, and tarred boots, clambered solemnly up on to the box. I took my seat, looking at my watch: it was a quarter past ten. Ermolai did not even say good-bye to me—he was engaged in beating his Valetka.

Filofei tugged at the reins, and shouted in a thin voice, "Hey! You little ones!"

His brothers skipped up on both sides, lashed the trace-horses under the belly, and the coach started, turned out of the gates into the street, the shaggy one tried to turn off towards his own home, but Filofei brought him to reason with a few lashes of the whip, and behold! We were already out of the village, and rolling along a fairly even road, between close-growing bushes of hazels.

It was a still, glorious night, the very nicest for driving. A breeze rustled now and then in the bushes, set the twigs swinging and died away again; in the sky could be seen motionless, silvery clouds; the moon stood high and threw a bright light on all around. I stretched myself on the hay, and was just beginning to doze... But I remembered the "queer place", and started up.

"I say, Filofei, is it far to the ford?"

"To the ford? It'll be near upon eight versts."

"Eight versts!" I mused. "We shan't get there for another hour. I can have a nap meanwhile. Filofei, do you know the road well?" I asked again.

"Surely; how could I fail to know it? It's not the first time I've driven here."

He said something more, but I had ceased to listen... I was asleep.

I was awakened not, as often happens, by my own intention of waking in exactly an hour, but by a sort of strange, though faint, lapping, gurgling sound at my very ear. I raised my head.

Wonderful to relate! I was lying in the coach as before, but all round the coach, a foot, not more, from its edge, a sheet of water lay shining in the moonlight, broken up into tiny, distinct, quivering ripples. I looked in front. On the box, with back bowed and head bent, Filofei was sitting like a carven image, and a little further on, above the rippling water, I saw the curved arch of the yoke, and the horses' heads and backs. And everything as motionless, as noiseless, as though in some enchanted realm, in a dream—a dream of fairyland... What did it mean? I looked back from under the hood of the coach. Why, we were in the middle of the river! The bank was some thirty paces from us.

"Filofei!" I cried.

"What?" he answered.

"What, indeed! Upon my word! Where are we?"

"In the river."

"I can see we're in the river. In all likelihood we shall be drowned directly. Is this how you ford the river? Eh? Why, you're asleep, Filofei! Answer, do!"

"I've made a little mistake," observed my guide, "I've gone to one side, a bit wrong, and now we've got to wait a bit."

"Got to wait a bit? Whatever are we going to wait for?"

"Well, we must let the shaggy one look about him; which way he turns his head, that way we've got to go."

I raised myself on the hay. The shaft-horse's head stood quite motionless. Above the head one could see in the bright moonlight one ear slightly twitching backwards and forwards.

"Why, he's asleep, too, your shaggy one!"

"No," responded Filofei, "he's sniffing the water now."

And everything was still again; there was only the faint gurgle of the water as before. I sank into a state of torpor.

Moonlight, and night, and the river, and we in it...

"What is that hissing noise?" I asked Filofei.

"That? Ducks in the reeds... or else snakes."

All of a sudden the head of the shaft-horse jerked, his ears pricked up; he gave a snort, began to move. "Ho-ho, ho-ho-o!" Filofei began suddenly bawling at the top of his voice; he sat up and brandished the whip. The coach was at once tugged away from where it had stuck, it plunged forward, cleaving the waters of the river, and moved along, swaying and lurching from side to side. At first it seemed to me we were sinking, getting deeper; however, after two or three tugs and dives, the expanse of water seemed suddenly lower... It got lower and lower, the coach seemed to grow up out of it, and now the wheels and the horses' tails could be seen, and now stirring with a mighty splashing of big drops, scattering showers of diamonds—no, not diamonds—sapphires in the dull brilliance of the moon, the horses with a spirited pull all together drew us on the sandy bank and trotted along the road uphill, their shining wet legs flashing in rivalry.

"What will Filofei say now?" was the thought that flashed through my mind. "You see I was right!" or something of that sort. But he said nothing. So I, too, did not think it necessary to reproach him for carelessness, and lying down in the hay, I tried again to go to sleep.

But I could not go to sleep, not because I was not tired from hunting, and not because the exciting experience I had just been through had dispelled my sleepiness: it was that we were driving through such very beautiful country. There were liberal, wide-stretching, grassy riverside meadows, with a multitude of small pools, rivulets, creeks overgrown with willows and osiers—a regular Russian scene, such as Russians love, like the scenes amid which the heroes of our old legends rode out to shoot white swans and grey ducks. The well-packed road wound in a yellowish ribbon, the horses ran lightly—and I could not close my eyes. I was feasting them on the scene that floated by, softened into harmony under the kindly light of the moon. Filofei—even he was touched by it.

"These meadows are called St. George's," he said, turning to me. "And beyond them come the Grand Duke's; there are no other meadows like them in all Russia... Ah, it's lovely!" The shaft-horse snorted and shook itself. "God bless you," commented Filofei gravely in an undertone. "How lovely!" he repeated with a sigh; then he gave a long sort of grunt. "There, mowing time's just upon us, and think what hay they'll rake up there!—regular mountains! And there are lots of fish in the creeks. Such bream!" he added in a sing-song voice. "In one word, life's sweet—one doesn't want to die."

He suddenly raised his hand.

"Hullo! Look-ee! Over the lake... Is it a crane standing there? Can it be fishing at night? Bless me! It's a branch, not a crane. Well, that was a mistake! But the moon is always so tricky."

So we drove on and on. But now the end of the meadows had been reached, little copses and ploughed fields came into view; a little village flashed with two or three lights on one side—it was only about five versts now to the main road. I fell asleep.

Again I did not wake up of my own accord. This time I was roused by the voice of Filofei.

"Master!... Hey, master!"

I sat up. The coach was standing still on level ground, in the very middle of the highroad. Filofei, who had turned round on the box, so as to face me, with wide-open eyes (I was positively surprised at them; I couldn't have imagined he had such large eyes), was whispering with mysterious significance:

"Hear?... Wheels rattling!"

"What do you say?"

"I say there's a rattling! Bend down and listen. Do you hear it?"

I put my head out of the coach, held my breath, and did catch, somewhere in the distance, far behind us, a faint broken sound, as of wheels rolling.

"Do you hear it?" repeated Filofei.

"Well, yes," I answered. "Some vehicle is coming."

"And do you hear . . . there! The bells . . . and whistling, too . . . Do you hear? Take off your cap . . . you will hear better."

I didn't take off my cap, but I listened.

"Well, yes . . . perhaps. But what of it?"

Filofei turned round to face the horses.

"It's a cart coming . . . lightly; iron-rimmed wheels," he observed, and he took up the reins. "It's wicked folks coming, master; hereabouts, you know, near Tula, they play a good many tricks."

"What nonsense! What makes you suppose it's sure to be wicked people?"

"I speak the truth . . . with bells . . . and in an empty cart . . . Who else should it be?"

"Well . . . is it much further to Tula?"

"There's fifteen versts further to go, and not a homestead anywhere."

"Well, then, get on quicker; it's no good lingering."

Filofei brandished the whip, and the coach rolled on again.

Though I did not put much faith in Filofei's words, I could not go to sleep. What if it really is so? A disagreeable sensation began to stir in me. I sat up in the coach—till then I had been lying down—and began looking in all directions. While I had been asleep, a slight mist had come over, not the earth, but the sky; it stood high, the moon hung a whitish patch in it, as though in smoke. Everything had grown dim and blended together, though it was clearer near the ground. Around us was flat, dreary country: fields, nothing but fields, here and there bushes and ravines, and again fields, mostly fallow, with scanty, dusty weeds. A wilderness . . . deathlike! If only a quail had called!

We drove on for half an hour. Filofei kept constantly cracking his whip and urging the horses on, but neither he nor I spoke a word. We mounted a hillside . . . Filofei pulled up the horses, and promptly said again:

"There they are, rattling, master; yes, they are!"

I poked my head out of the coach again, but I might have stayed under the cover of the hood, so distinctly, though still from a distance, the sound reached me of cart wheels, men whistling, the jingling of bells, and even the thud of horses' hoofs; I even fancied I could hear singing and laughter. The wind, it is true, was blowing behind but there was no doubt that the unknown travellers had come a good verst, perhaps two, nearer us.

Filofei and I looked at one another; he only pushed his hat forward from behind, and at once, bending over the reins, fell to whipping up the horses. They set off at a gallop, but they could not gallop for long, and fell back into a trot again. Filofei continued to whip them. We must get away!

I can't account for the fact that, though I had not at first shared Filofei's apprehensions, about this time I suddenly gained the conviction that we really were being followed by highwaymen. I had heard nothing new: the same bells, the same rattle of a cart without a load, the same intermittent whistling, the same confused uproar. But now I had no doubt. Filofei could not have made a mistake!

And now twenty minutes more had gone by. During the last of these twenty minutes, even through the clatter and rumble of our own carriage, we could hear another clatter and another rumbling.

"Stop, Filofei," I said, "it's no use."

Filofei uttered a faint-hearted "wo"! The horses instantaneously stopped, as though delighted at the chance of resting!

Mercy upon us! The bells were simply crashing away just behind our backs, the cart was rattling and creaking, the men were whistling, shouting, and singing, the horses were snorting and thumping on the ground with their hoofs.

They were overtaking us!

"There'll be trouble." Filofei commented in an emphatic undertone; and began to urge the horses again. But at that very instant there was a sort of sudden rush and whizz, and a very big, wide cart, harnessed with three lean horses, skirted us sharply, like the wind, galloped in front, and at once fell into a walking pace, blocking up the road.

"A regular brigand's trick!" murmured Filofei.

I must own I felt a cold chill at my heart . . . I stared before me with strained attention in the half-darkness of the misty moonlight. In the

cart in front of us were—half-lying, half-sitting—six men in shirts and in unbuttoned overcoats; two of them had no caps on; huge feet in boots were swinging and hanging over the cart-edge, arms were rising and falling helter-skelter, bodies were jolting backwards and forwards... It was quite clear—a drunken party. Some were bawling at random; one was whistling very correctly and shrilly, another was swearing; on the driver's seat sat a sort of giant in a sheepskin, driving. They went at a walking pace, as though paying no attention to us.

What was to be done? We followed them also at a walking pace... We could do nothing else.

For a quarter of a verst we moved along in this manner. The suspense was torturing. To fight, to defend ourselves, was out of the question! There were six of them; and I hadn't even a stick! Should we turn back? But they would catch us up directly. I remembered the line of Zhukovsky (in the passage where he speaks of the murder of Field-Marshal Kamensky):

The scoundrel highwayman's vile axe!...

Or else—strangled with filthy cord... flung into a ditch... there to choke and struggle like a hare in a trap...

It was bad business!

And they, as before, went on at a walking pace, taking no notice of us.

"Filofei!" I whispered. "Just try to keep more to the right; see if you can get by."

Filofei tried moving to the right... but they promptly moved to the right, too. It was impossible to get by.

Filofei made another effort; he kept to the left. But there, again, they did not let him pass the cart. They even laughed aloud. That meant that they wouldn't let us pass.

"They are a bad lot," Filofei whispered to me over his shoulder.

"But what are they waiting for?" I inquired, also in a whisper.

"To reach the bridge—over there in front—in the hollow—above the stream. They'll do for us there! That's always their way... by bridges. We're done for, master." He added with a sigh, "They'll hardly let us go alive; the great thing for them is not to leave a trace. I'm sorry for one thing, master: my horses are lost, and my brothers won't get them!"

I should have been surprised that Filofei could still bother about his horses at such a moment; but, I must confess, I had no thoughts for him. "Will they really kill me?" I kept repeating mentally. "Why should they? I'll give them everything I have..."

And the bridge was getting nearer and nearer; it could be more and more clearly seen.

Suddenly a sharp whoop was heard; the cart before us flew ahead, reaching the bridge, and at once stopped stock-still a little on one side of the road. My heart fairly sank like lead.

"Ah, brother Filofei," I said, "we are going to our death. Forgive me for bringing you to ruin."

"As though it were your fault, master! There's no escaping one's fate! Come, Shaggy, my trusty little horse," Filofei addressed the shaft-horse, "step on, brother! Do your last bit of service! It's all the same. Here goes!"

And he urged his horses into a trot. We began to get near the bridle—near that motionless, ominous cart. In it everything was silent, as though on purpose. It was the stillness of the pike or the hawk, of every beast of prey, as its victim approaches. And now we were level with the cart... Suddenly the giant in the sheepskin sprang out of the cart and came straight towards us!

He said nothing to Filofei, but the latter, of his own accord, tugged at the reins. The coach stopped.

The giant laid both arms on the carriage door, and bending forward his shaggy head with a grin, he uttered the following speech in a soft, even voice, with the accent of factory-hand:

"Honoured sir, we are coming from an honest feast—from a wedding; we've been marrying one of our fine fellows—that is, we've put him to bed; we're all young lads, reckless chaps—there's been a good deal of drinking, and nothing to sober us; so wouldn't your honour be so good as to favour us with some money, the least little, just for a dram of vodka for every man? We'd drink to your health, and remember your worship; but if you won't grant our request, be it so, don't hold it against us!"

"What's the meaning of this?" I thought. "Mockery?... Jeering?"

The giant continued to stand with bent head. At that very instant the moon emerged from the fog and lighted up his face. There was a grin on the face, in the eyes, and on the lips. But there was nothing

threatening to be seen in it... only it seemed all on the alert, as it were... and the teeth were so white and large...

"I shall be pleased... take this..." I said hurriedly, and pulling my purse out of my pocket, I took out two silver rubles—at that time silver was still circulating in Russia—"Here, if that's enough?"

"Much obliged!" bawled the giant, in military fashion; and his fat fingers in a flash snatched from me—not the whole purse—but only the two rubles. "Much obliged!" He shook his hair back, and ran up to the cart.

"Lads!" he shouted. "The gentleman makes us a present of two silver rubles!" They all began, as it were, gabbling at once. The giant jumped up on to the driver's seat.

"Good luck to you, master!"

And that was the last we saw of them. The horses dashed on, the cart rumbled up the hill; once more it stood out on the dark line separating the earth from the sky, went down, and vanished.

And now the rattle of the wheels, the shouts and bells could not be heard.

There was a death-like silence.

Filofei and I could not recover ourselves all at once.

"Ah, he's a merry devil!" he commented at last, and taking off his hat he began crossing himself. "A devil, on my word," he added, and he turned to me, beaming all over. "But he must be a capital fellow—on my word! Now, now, now, little ones, look alive! You're safe! We are all safe! It was he who wouldn't let us get by; it was he who drove the horses. What a chap for a joke! Now, now! get on, in God's name!"

I did not speak, but I felt happy, too. "We are safe!" I repeated to myself, and lay down on the hay. "We've got off cheap!"

I even felt rather ashamed that I had remembered that line of Zhukovsky's.

Suddenly an idea occurred to me.

"Filofei!"

"What is it?"

"Are you married?"

"Yes."

"And have you children?"

"Yes."

"How was it you didn't think of them? You were sorry for your horses; weren't you sorry for your wife and children?"

"Why be sorry for them? They weren't going to fall into the hands of thieves, you know. But I kept them in my mind all the while, and I do now . . . surely." Filofei paused. "Maybe . . . it was for their sake Almighty God had mercy on us."

"But if they weren't highwaymen?"

"How can we tell? Can one look into the soul of another? Another's soul, we know, is a dark place. But, with the thought of God in the heart, things are always better. No, no! . . . I'd my family all the time . . . Gee . . . gee-up, little ones! Step lively!"

It was almost daylight when we approached Tula. I was lying, dreamy and half-asleep.

"Master," Filofei said to me suddenly, "look: there they're stopping at the tavern . . . their cart."

I raised my head. There they were, and their cart and horses. In the doorway of the drinking-house there suddenly appeared our friend, the giant in the sheepskin. "Sir!" he shouted, waving his cap, "we're drinking your health! Hey, coachman," he added, wagging his head at Filofei, "you were a bit scared, I shouldn't wonder, hey?"

"A merry fellow!" observed Filofei when we had driven some fifty yards from the tavern.

We got into Tula at last; I bought shot, and while I was about it, tea and spirits, and even got a horse from the horse-dealer.

At midday we set off home again. As we drove by the place where we first heard the rattle of the cart behind us, Filofei, who, having had something to drink at Tula, turned out to be a very talkative fellow—he even told me fairy-tales—suddenly burst out laughing.

"Do you remember, master, how I kept saying to you, 'There's a rattling, wheels rattling,' I said!"

He waved his hand several times. This expression struck him as most amusing.

The same evening we got back to his village.

I related the adventure that had befallen us to Ermolai. Being sober, he expressed no sympathy; he only gave a grunt—whether of approval or reproach, I imagine he did not know himself. But two days later he informed me, with great satisfaction, that the very night

Filofei and I had been driving to Tula, and on the very road, a merchant had been robbed and murdered. I did not at first put much faith in this, but later on I was obliged to believe it: it was confirmed by the police captain, who went galloping through our village on his way to investigate the crime.

Was not that perhaps the "wedding" our brave spirits were returning from? Wasn't that the "fine fellow" they had "put to bed," in the words of the jocose giant? I stayed five days longer in Filofei's village. Whenever I met him, I always said to him, "Wheels rattling? Eh?"

"A merry fellow!" he always answered and burst out laughing.

THE FOREST AND THE STEPPE

*And slowly something began to draw him
Back to the country, to the garden dark,
Where lime-trees are so huge, so full of shade,
And lilies of the valley, sweet as maids,
Where rounded willows o'er the water's edge
Lean from the dyke in rows, and where the oak
Sturdily grows above the sturdy field.
Amid the smell of hemp and nettles rank...
There, there, in meadows stretching wide,
Where rich and black as velvet is the earth,
Where the sweet rye, far as the eye can see,
Flows noiselessly in tender, billowing waves,
And where the heavy golden light is shed
From out of rounded, white, transparent clouds:
There it is good...*

(From a poem consigned to the flames)

The reader is, very likely, weary of my sketches; I hasten to reassure him by promising to confine myself to the 'fragments already printed; but I cannot refrain from saying a few words at parting about a hunter's life.

Hunting with a dog and a gun is delightful in itself, *für sich*, as they used to say in old days; but let us suppose you were not born a hunter, but are fond of nature and freedom all the same; you cannot then help envying us hunters... Listen.

Do you know, for instance, the delight of setting off before day-break in spring? You come out on to the steps... In the dark-grey sky stars are twinkling here and there; a damp breeze in faint gusts flies to meet you now and then; there is heard the secret, vague whispering of the night; the trees faintly rustle, wrapped in darkness. And now they put a rug in the cart, and lay a box with the samovar

at your feet. The trace-horses move restlessly, snort, and daintily paw the ground; a couple of white geese, only just awake, waddle slowly and silently across the road. On the other side of the fence, in the garden, the watchman is snoring peacefully; every sound seems to stand still in the frozen air—suspended, not moving. You take your seat; the horses start at once; the cart rolls off with a loud rumble. You ride—ride past the church, downhill to the right, across the dyke . . . The pond is just beginning to be wreathed in mist. You are rather chilly; you cover your face with the collar of your fur cloak; you doze. The horses' hooves splash sonorously through the puddles; the coachman whistles a tune. Now you have driven over four versts . . . the rim of the sky flushes crimson; the jackdaws are heard, fluttering clumsily in the birch-trees; sparrows are twittering about the dark ricks. The air is clearer, the road more distinct, the sky has brightened, the clouds look whiter, and the fields look greener. In the huts there is the red light of burning splinters; from behind gates come the sounds of sleepy voices. And meanwhile the glow of dawn is beginning; already streaks of gold are stretching across the sky; mists are whirling in the ravines; the larks are singing musically; the breeze that ushers in the dawn is blowing—and slowly the purple sun floats upward. There is a perfect flood of light; your heart is fluttering like a bird. Everything is fresh, gay, delightful! One can see a long way all round. That way, beyond the copse, a village; there, further, another, with a white church, and there a birch-wood on the hill; behind it the marsh, for which you are bound . . . Faster, horses, faster! Forward at a good trot! . . . There are three versts to go—not more. The sun mounts swiftly higher; the sky is clear. It will be a glorious day. A herd of cattle comes straggling from the village to meet you. You go up the hill . . . What a view! The river winds for ten versts, dimly blue through the mist; beyond it meadows of watery green; beyond the meadows sloping hills; in the distance the peewits are wheeling with loud cries above the marsh; through the moist brilliance suffused in the air the distance stands out clearly . . . not as in the summer. How freely one drinks in the air, how quickly the lumps move, how strong is the whole man, enveloped in the fresh breath of spring! . . .

And a summer morning—a morning in July! Who but the hunter knows how delightful it is to wander at daybreak among the under-woods? The print of your feet lies in a green track on the grass, white with dew. You part the drenched bushes; you are met by a rush of

the warm fragrance stored up in the night; the air is saturated with the fresh bitterness of wormwood, the honey sweetness of buckwheat and clover; in the distance an oak wood stands like a wall, and glows and glistens in the sun; the air is still crisp, but already the approach of heat is felt. The head is faint and dizzy from the excess of sweet scents. The copse stretches on endlessly. Only in places there are yellow glimpses in the distance of ripening rye, and narrow streaks of red buckwheat. Then there is the creak of cart wheels, a peasant makes his way among the bushes at a walking pace, and sets his horse in the shade before the heat of the day. You greet him, and walk on; the musical swish of the scythe is heard behind you. The sun rises higher and higher. The grass is speedily drying. And now it is quite hot. One hour passes, another . . . The sky grows dark over the horizon; the still air is baked with prickly heat.

"Where can one get a drink here, brother?" you inquire of the mower.

"Yonder, in the ravine's a well."

Through the thick hazel bushes, tangled by the clinging grass, you make your way down to the bottom of the ravine. Indeed, right under the cliff a little spring is hidden; an oak bush greedily spreads out its palmated branches over the water; great silvery bubbles rise swaying from the bottom, covered with fine velvety moss. You fling yourself on the ground, you drink your fill, but you are too lazy to stir. You are in the shade, you drink in the damp fragrance, you are relaxed, while the bushes face you, glowing and, as it were, turning yellow in the sun. But what is that? There is a sudden flying gust of wind; the air is astir all about you: was not that thunder? You climb out of the ravine and peer wonderingly at a leaden strip on the horizon. Is it the heat thickening? Is a storm coming on? . . . And now there is a faint flash of lightning. Yes, there will be a storm! The sun is still blazing; you can still go on hunting. But the storm-cloud grows; its front edge, drawn out like a long sleeve, befalls over into an arch. The grass, the bushes, everything suddenly grows dark. Make haste! Over there you think you catch sight of a hay-barn . . . make haste! . . . You run there, go in . . . What rain! What flashes of lightning! The water drips in through some hole in the thatch-roof on to the sweet-smelling hay. But now the sun is shining bright again. The storm is over; you come out. My God, the joyous sparkle of everything! The fresh, limpid air, the scent of raspberries and mushrooms!

And then the evening comes on. There is the blaze of fire covering half the sky. The sun sets; the air near you has a peculiar transparency as of crystal; over the distance lies a soft, warm-looking haze; with the dew a crimson light is shed on the clearings lately plunged in floods of limpid gold; long shadows run from trees and bushes and high stacks of hay. The sun has set; a star gleams and quivers in the fiery sea of the sunset; and now it pales; the sky glows blue; the separate shadows vanish; the air is plunged in darkness. It is time to turn homewards to the village, to the hut, where you will stay the night. Shouldering your gun, you move briskly, in spite of fatigue. Meanwhile, the night comes on: now you cannot see twenty paces from you; the dogs show faintly white in the dark. Over there, above the black bushes, there is a vague brightness on the horizon. What is it?—a fire?... No, it is the moon rising. And away below, to the right, the village lights are twinkling already. And here at last is your hut. Through the window you see a table, with a white cloth, a candle burning, supper...

Another time you order the droshky to be got out, and set off to the forest to shoot hazel grouse. It is pleasant making your way along the narrow path between two high walls of rye. The ears softly strike you in the face; the corn-flowers cling round your legs; the quails call around; the horse moves along at a lazy trot. And here is the forest, all shade and silence. Graceful aspens rustle high above you; the long hanging branches of the birches scarcely stir; a mighty oak stands like a champion beside a lovely lime-tree. You go along the green path, spotted with shade; great yellow flies stay suspended, motionless, in the sunny air, and suddenly dart away; midges hover in a cloud, bright in the shade, dark in the sun. The birds are singing peacefully; the golden little voice of the warbler sings of innocent, babbling joyousness, in sweet accord with the scent of the lilies of the valley. Further, further, deeper into the forest... the forest grows more dense... An unutterable stillness falls upon the soul within; without, too, all is still and dreamy. But now a wind has sprung up, and the tree-tops are booming like falling waves. Here and there, through last year's brown leaves, grow tall grasses; mushrooms stand apart under their wide-brimmed hats. All at once a hare skips out; the dog scurries after it with a resounding bark...

And how fair is this same forest in late autumn, when the woodcocks are on the wing! They do not keep in the heart of the forest; one must look for them along the edge. There is no wind, and no sun, no light, no shade, no movement, no sound; the autumn aroma, like the aroma of wine, is diffused in the soft air; a thin haze hangs over the yellow fields in the distance. The still sky is a peacefully untroubled white through the bare brown branches; here and there, on the limes, hang the last golden leaves. The damp earth is elastic under your feet; the high dry blades of grass do not stir; long threads lie shining on the blanched turf, white with dew. You breathe tranquilly; but there is a strange tremor in the soul. You walk along the forest's edge, look after your dog, and meanwhile loved forms, loved faces, dead and living, come to your mind; long, long slumbering impressions unexpectedly awaken; the fancy darts off and soars like a bird; and all moves so clearly and stands out before your eyes. The heart at one time throbs and beats, plunging passionately forward; at another it is drowned beyond recall in memories. Your whole life unrolls lightly and rapidly before you like a scroll; a man at such times possesses all his past, all his feelings and his powers—all his soul; and there is nothing around to hinder him—no sun, no wind, no sound . . .

And a clear, crisp autumn day, with a frost in the morning, when the birch, all golden like some tree in a fairy-tale, stands out picturesquely against the pale-blue sky; when the sun, standing low in the sky, does not warm, but shines more brightly than in summer; the small aspen copse is all a-sparkle through and through, as though it were glad and light in its nakedness; the hoar-frost is still white at the bottom of the hollows; while a fresh wind softly stirs up and drives before it the fallen crumpled leaves; when blue ripples whisk gladly along the river, lifting rhythmically the scattered geese and ducks; in the distance the mill creaks, half hidden by the willows; and the pigeons wheel in swift circles above it, dark against the clear air.

Sweet, too, are dull days in summer, though the hunters do not like them. On such days one can't shoot: the bird that flutters up from under your very feet vanishes at once in the dense whiteness of the hanging fog. But how peaceful, how unutterably peaceful it is every-

where! Everything is awake, and everything is hushed. You pass by a tree: it does not stir a leaf; it is basking in repose. Through the thin steamy mist, evenly diffused in the air, there is a long streak of black before you. You take it for a neighbouring copse close at hand; you go up—the copse is transformed into a tall row of wormwood in the boundary-line. Above you, around you, on all sides—mist . . . But now a breeze is faintly astir; a patch of pale-blue sky peeps dimly out through the thinning, as it were, steaming mist; a ray of golden-yellow sunshine breaks out suddenly, flows in a long stream, strikes on the fields and in the copse—and then everything is overcast again. This struggle is drawn out for a long time, but how unutterably brilliant and magnificent does the day become when finally light triumphs and the last waves of the warmed mist here unroll and are spread out over the plains, there coil and vanish into the deep, softly shining heights.

Or you set off into outlying country, to the steppe. For some ten versts you make your way over cross-cart tracks, and here at last is the highroad. Past endless trains of carts, past wayside taverns, with the hissing samovar under a shed, wide-open gates and a well, from one hamlet to another; across endless fields, alongside green hemp-plots, you drive a long, long time. Magpies flutter from willow to willow; peasant women with long rakes in their hands plod into the fields; a wandering man in a threadbare nankeen overcoat, with a wicker pannier over his shoulder, trudges along with weary step; a heavy country coach, harnessed with six tall, broken-winded horses, rolls to meet you. The corner of a cushion is sticking out of a window, and on a sack up behind, holding on to a rope, perches a groom in a coat, splashed with mud to his very eyebrows. And here is the little uyezd town with its crooked little wooden houses, its endless fences, its empty stone shops, its old-fashioned bridge over a deep ravine. On, on! . . . The steppe country is reached at last. You look from a hill-top; what a view! Round low hills, ploughed up and sown to their very tops, are seen in broad undulations; ravines, overgrown with bushes, wind coiling among them; small copses are scattered like oblong islands; from village to village run narrow paths, churches stand out white; between willow bushes glimmers a little river, in four places dammed up by dykes; far off, in a field, their is a cluster of buzzards; on old manor house, with its outhouses,

orchard, and threshing-floor, huddles close up to a small pond. But on, on you go. The hills are smaller and ever smaller; there is scarcely a tree to be seen. Here it is at last—the boundless, untrodden steppe!

And on a winter day to walk over the high snowdrifts after hares; to breathe the keen frosty air, while half-closing the eyes involuntarily at the fine blinding sparkle of the soft snow; to admire the emerald sky above the reddish forest! . . . And the first spring day when everything is shining, and breaking up, when through the heavy steam of the melting snow, there is already the scent of the thawing earth; when on the bare thawed places, under the slanting sunshine, the larks are singing confidently, and, with glad splash and roar, the torrents roll from ravine to ravine.

But it is time to end. By the way, I have spoken of spring: in spring it is easy to part; in spring even the happy feel the pull of the distance . . . Farewell, reader! I wish you unbroken prosperity.

**IVAN TURGENEV'S
LIFE AND WORK**

A Short Chronology

1818, October 28 (November 9)—a son Ivan is born to retired colonel Sergei Nikolayevich Turgenev and his wife Varvara Petrovna, née Lutovinova, in Orel, a gubernia centre in Central Russia.

1828-1830—Ivan Turgenev attends a private boarding-school of I. I. Weidenhammer.

1831-1833—is taught at home, preparing for the University.

1833, September 20—enrolled at the Department of Literature of Moscow University.

1834, middle of June—moves to St. Petersburg with his father;

—July 18 (30)—Turgenev presents an application to St. Petersburg University and is enrolled in the Department of History and Philology as a paying student;

—October 30 (November 11)—his father dies.

1835—attends Nikolai Gogol's lectures on world history.

1836, June—graduation from the University; Turgenev stays on for another year to prepare for the Candidate's examination;

—end of the year—shows the University's rector P. A. Pletnyov his poem "Steno".

1837, late January—Turgenev pays his last respects to Pushkin;

—June 24—granted the degree of Candidate of Philosophy;

—spends the summer at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo; the beginning of his enthusiasm for hunting.

1838, May 15 (27)—goes abroad to continue his education;

—several poems published in magazines in the course of the year.

1839—Turgenev is in Berlin; makes the acquaintance of Mikhail Bakunin; returns to Russia in summer;

1840, January—goes abroad; lives in Berlin until May 1841, travels in Europe;

1841, summer—lives in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, goes hunting a great deal; several poems published by *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* over the year.

1842—spends the winter in Moscow, preparing for the Master's examination; makes many acquaintances in the literary world;

—April 26 (May 8)—the birth of Polina, his illegitimate daughter by A. Y. Ivanova;

—between July and December Turgenev stays in Germany.

1843—early in the year makes the acquaintance of Vissarion Belinsky;

—April—his long poem "Parasha" comes out in book form; regarded this poem as his first literary work;

—June 8 (20)—receives a post at the Ministry of Internal Affairs; in July is affirmed in the rank of Collegiate Secretary;

—late October—makes the acquaintance of Pauline Viardot.

1844—Turgenev's poems are published in the early issues of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* and *Sovremennik*;

—November—Turgenev's first prosaic work, the short novel "Andrei Kolosov" is published in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*.

1845, early January—his long poem "Conversation" comes out in book form;

—April 18 (30)—resigns from civil service;

—November—meets Fyodor Dostoyevsky;

1846, January—the *St. Petersburg Collection* published by Nekrasov carries his long story "Three Portraits", the poem "The Landlord" and poetic translations; *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* publishes his poem "Andrei";

—stays at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo between May and October, hunts a great deal;

—Nekrasov and Panayev purchase the journal *Sovremennik*, counting, among other things, on contributions from Turgenev;

—"Khor and Kalinich" was written this year.

1847, January—the first issue of *Sovremennik* comes out, carrying "Khor and Kalinich", a book review, a satirical story and a poetic cycle by Turgenev;

—in the second half of January Turgenev goes abroad, to stay there for more than three years, until June 1850;

—February—*Sovremennik* publishes "Pyotr Petrovich Karataev" later included in *A Hunter's Sketches*; Turgenev works assiduously on other sketches as well;

—early May—the fifth book of *Sovremennik* carries "My Neighbour Radlov", "Freeholder Ovsyanikov", "Lgov" and "Ermolai and the Miller's Wife";

—May 9 (21)—Belinsky arrives in Berlin and stops at Turgenev's;

—till early July Turgenev and Belinsky were in Salzbrunn; Turgenev works on the story "The Steward";

—July 18 (30)—Turgenev is in Paris, where he sees Belinsky several times; those were their last meetings;

—in early October comes out the tenth issue of *Sovremennik* with the stories "The Steward" and "The Counting-House";

—the thought of publishing *A Hunter's Sketches* in book form finally takes shape in these months.

1848—the February issue of *Sovremennik* carries "Raspberry Water", "The Country Doctor", "Biryuk", "Lebedyan", "Tatyana Borisovna and Her Nephew" and "Death";

—February 14 (26)—during his stay in Brussels Turgenev learns of the coup d'état in France and immediately returns to Paris;

—often visits Herzen in Paris; sees Mikhail Bakunin.

1849, early February—*Sovremennik* publishes "The Hamlet of Schigri Uyezd", "Chertopkhanov and Nedopyuskin" and "The Forest and the Steppe";

—nursed during his illness in May by Herzen;

—spends the summer and autumn in Courtavenel, a suburb of Paris, at Pauline Viardot's house; writes a lot;

—Turgenev's mother discontinues his allowance.

1850, January—Turgenev is in Paris, finishing his work on "The Diary of a Superfluous Person" (published in the April issue of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*)

—in June returns home to Russia; quarrels with his mother and goes to his patrimony Turgenevo, where he spends the summer;

—deciding to continue with *A Hunter's Sketches*, works on the stories "The Tryst" and "The Singers";

—October 23 (November 4)—sends his daughter Polina from St. Petersburg to Pauline Viardot in Paris.

—November 16 (28)—Turgenev's mother dies.

1851, January—Turgenev is in Moscow attending to the formalities connected with his inheritance;

—the February issue of *Sovremennik* carries his story "Bezhin Meadow";

—in March *Sovremennik* publishes "Kasyan of Fair Springs";

—conducts negotiations about publishing *A Hunter's Sketches* in book form; in a letter Turgenev says that work on the book has been completed;

—spends the summer and autumn at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—November 3 (15)—attends Gogol's reading of his "Inspector-General" in Moscow.

1852, January—Turgenev is in St. Petersburg working on a play;

—February 21 (March 4)—Nikolai Gogol dies;

—March 6 (19)—the censorship issues a warrant for the publication of *A Hunter's Sketches* in book form;

—March 13 (25)—the newspaper *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* carries Turgenev's obituary article on the death of Gogol;

—April 16 (28)—Turgenev is arrested in connection with this article "for disobedience and violation of censorship regulations";

—May 13 (25)—both parts of *A Hunter's Sketches* are forwarded to the head office of the Minister of Popular Education for a testimonial;

—May 16 (28)—Turgenev is released from custody and subsequently exiled to his estate to be under police surveillance; Turgenev, as well as his friends, are under the impression that he has been "punished" not only for his article about Gogol but also for *A Hunter's Sketches*;

—June 6 (18)—Turgenev reports his arrival at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—June 25 (July 7)—the censor E. E. Volkov gives a disapprobatory opinion of *A Hunter's Sketches*;

—early August—the book *A Hunter's Sketches* is on sale in bookshops;

—August 5 (17)—E. E. Volkov submits a second report;

—August 15 (27)—the censor Prince V. V. Lvov, who cleared *A Hunter's Sketches* for publication, is removed from his post by order of Tsar Nicholas I;

—Turgenev spends the summer and autumn at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo hunting; conceives the idea for a novel *Two Generations*, on which he works the following winter; the fate of the manuscript is unknown to this day;

—October 18 (30)—begins work on the long story "The Inn" which he finishes in November.

1853—A New Year party at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—March—Turgenev goes to Moscow with another person's passport to meet Pauline Viardot;

—in spring and summer the exiled author is visited by Afanasi Fet, Pyotr Kireyevsky, Mikhail Schepkin and Ivan Aksakov;

—November 23 (December 5)—Turgenev receives notice about termination of his exile;

—December 9 (21)—returns to St. Petersburg.

1854, February—on Turgenev's insistence and with his help, Tyutchev prepares the first collection of his poems for publication;

—March—*Sovremennik* publishes the story "Mumu", which Turgenev wrote in 1852 while under arrest;

—Turgenev spends the summer in a country villa near Peterhoff, keeping himself posted about developments in the war;

—August 10 (22)—publishes a protest against distortions in the French translation of *A Hunter's Sketches* and the use made of the book for purposes of anti-Russian propaganda;

—September 22 (October 4)—Turgenev arrives in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo with Nekrassov;

—October—makes the acquaintance of Maria Tolstaya who tells him about her brother Lev; his infatuation with Tolstaya later found reflection in his story "Faustus";

—November—Turgenev is in St. Petersburg.

1855, January—attends Moscow University's centenary celebrations;

—four stories from *A Hunter's Sketches* ("The Steward", "Pyotr Petrovich Karataev", "Lgov" and "The Singers") are published by Charles Dickens in his magazine *Household Words*;

—December—Turgenev makes the acquaintance of Lev Tolstoy recently arrived from Sevastopol;

1856, January—the first issues of *Sovremennik* carry the novel *Rudin*;

—June—Lev Tolstoy visits Turgenev at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—August 19 (31)—Turgenev meets Herzen in London;

—November—Turgenev's *Stories* come out in three books.

1857, January-February—Turgenev meets Tolstoy and Nekrassov in Paris; it was also at this time that he made the acquaintance of Prosper Mérimée;

—May—visits Herzen in London, where he makes the acquaintance of Carlyle, Thackeray, Disraeli and Macaulay;

—August 19 (31)—in Paris Ivan Goncharov reads his recently completed novel *Oblomov* to Turgenev, Botkin and Fet;

—December—Turgenev writes Herzen about the impression made by the first official announcement of the peasant reform in Russia; ⁶

1858—the long story “Asya” is published in the January issue of *Sovremennik*;

—in April or early May Turgenev and Mérimée are present at a dinner of the English Literary Fund in London presided by Lord Palmerston;

—from June Turgenev is in Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, where he works strenuously on *A Nest of the Gentry*;

1859, January—the novel *A Nest of the Gentry* is published by *Sovremennik*; in August it comes in book form;

—February—a society of the Literary Fund is formed in Russia; Turgenev is one of the sponsors;

—early May—the second edition of *A Hunter's Sketches* comes out.

1860, February—the novel *On the Eve* is published in the first issue of the journal *Russki Vestnik*;

—March—*The First Love* comes out in the journal *Biblioteka dlia chtenia*;

—August—a trip to London and the Isle of Wight, where, according to Turgenev's testimony, the idea of *Fathers and Sons* first occurred to him;

—September 30 (October 12)—the censor's office issues permission for the publication of Turgenev's works (brought out in 4 volumes by N. A. Osnovsky in Moscow) in which *A Hunter's Sketches* is included for the first time;

—October—Turgenev breaks with *Sovremennik*;

—November 24 (December 6)—election of Turgenev as corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

1861, early February—Turgenev learns about the imminent publication of the Manifesto on the abolition of serfdom in Russia (it was signed on February 7 (19) and published a month later);

—April 18 (30)—Herzen sends Turgenev a letter of recommendation to Garibaldi;

—May 27 (June 8)—quarrel with Lev Tolstoy, which nearly culminated in a duel and was followed by an estrangement which continued for many years;

—August—Turgenev concludes work on the first variant of *Fathers and Sons* at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo.

1862, January—Turgenev meets Bakunin in Paris and helps him out financially;

—the February issue of *Russki Vestnik* carries *Fathers and Sons*; the novel comes out in book form in September;

—May—a trip to London to meet Herzen and Bakunin;

—May 26 (June 7)—returns to St. Petersburg where he find public unrest and widespread fires.

1863, January—Turgenev is summoned to St. Petersburg to testify on his connections with Herzen's *Kolokol*;

—February—Charles Edmont introduces Turgenev to the Goncourts' literary group (Magni dinners).

1864, January—Turgenev is questioned by the Senate's Commission in St. Petersburg;

—February, March—polemics between Herzen and Turgenev as regards his testimony;

—September—Turgenev settles in Baden-Baden and begins to build himself a house.

1865, February—the wedding of his daughter Polina to Bruere;

—April—The publication of his works is completed in Karlsruhe (five volumes, publisher F.I. Salayev); Turgenev introduces many changes into the text of *A Hunter's Sketches*.

1866, April—Turgenev publicly condemns Karakozov's assassination attempt on Tsar Alexander II;

—October—the beginning of Turgenev's correspondence and cooperation with the English author William Ralston.

1867, April—the novel *Smoke* is published by *Russky Vestnik*, a book edition coming out in Moscow in November.

1868, January—"The Brigadier" is published in *Vestnik Evrope*;

—March 26 (April 7)—in his letter to Ralston from Baden-Baden Turgenev draws his attention to Lev Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*; through Ralston he sends Thomas Carlyle a copy of the French translation of *Smoke*;

—June—en route through Berlin Turgenev meets L. Pich, Yu. Schmidt and B. Auerbach; the latter tells him the plot of the novel *Villa on the Rhine* and Turgenev writes a foreword to the Russian edition of the novel;

—June—two weeks spent at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—December 5 (17)—Turgenev published a protest in the London *Pall Mall Gazette* concerning a distorted translation of *Smoke* published in England under the title *Smoke or Life in Baden-Baden*.

1869, January—the long story “The Miserable One” is published by *Russki Vestnik*;

—the fourth collection of Turgenev’s works in 8 volumes is brought out; Volume One, including “Literary and Mundane Recollections”, comes out in November, Volume Eight (supplementary), in April 1870.

1870, January—the short story “An Odd Incident” is published by *Vestnik Evrope*;

—January 3 (15)—Turgenev’s last meeting with Herzen during the latter’s fatal illness;

—June—Turgenev and Ralston spend ten days together at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—August–September—Turgenev publishes his reports about the Franco-Prussian war in *Sankt-Peterburgskiy Vedomosti*;

—October—his long story “Kind Lear of the Steppes” is published;

—November 1 (13)—Turgenev arrives in London where he settles for permanent residence.

1871, January—the first issue of *Vestnik Evrope* carries his short story “Tap-tap-tap!”;

—April—in his letters to friends Turgenev gives his assessment of the political events connected with the Paris Commune;

—July 28 (August 9)—Turgenev makes a public speech in Edinburgh on the occasion of the centenary of birth of Sir Walter Scott;

—August—hunts in Pittlochry in Scotland;

—October—sells his house in Baden-Baden and moves to Paris; listens to Flaubert’s reading of *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*;

1872, January—the long story “Spring Waters” is published by *Vestnik Evrope*;

—January—Flaubert writes to George Sand about his meetings and literary discussions with Turgenev;

—September—Turgenev visits his daughter and new-born granddaughter Jeanne;

—October 18 (30)—Turgenev thanks George Sand for dedication to him of the sketch “Pierre Bonnin” published in *Le Temps*;

—November—publication of the short story “The End of Chertopkhanov”;

—corresponds with P. V. Annenkov about a possible sequel to *A Hunter’s Sketches*; his friends persuade Turgenev that the book should be preserved in its original form as “a monument that expressed a whole nation at a definite moment”;

—December—meets Pyotr Lavrov in Paris after his escape from penal servitude and emigration.

1873—Turgenev sees much of George Sand and Flaubert and is invited for long stays to Nohant and Croisset.

1874, January—send his sketch "A Living Relic" later included in *A Hunter's Sketches* for the collection *Skladchina* (A Pool) published for the benefit of the peasants stricken by famine in Russia;

—April—the short story "Punin and Baburin" is published;

—the joint purchase by Turgenev and Viardot of a country-house near Paris in Bougival;

—the completion of the fifth edition of Turgenev's works (in eight volumes, Moscow 1874), Volume One includes, for the first time, the sketch "Wheels Are Rattling", later incorporated into *A Hunter's Sketches*.

1875, February—Turgenev recommends Emile Zola for work on *Vestnik Evrope*;

—April—visits Flaubert and in his house meets Edmond Goncourt and Emile Zola;

—June—in Carlsbad, Turgenev often sees the poet Alexei Tolstoy and the publisher of *Vestnik Evrope* Mikhail Stasyulevich; Turgenev's brother Nikolai is also there;

—August 8 (20)—the newspaper *Sankt-Peterburgskiye Vedomosti* publishes Turgenev's review of the English translation of Lermontov's "Demon";

—September—visits his daughter Polina Bruere after the birth of his grandson Georges;

—September—plays host to Mikhail Saltykov-Schedrin in Bougival.

1876, January—*Vestnik Evrope* publishes the short story "The Clock";

—"dinner of the five" (Turgenev, Flaubert, Goncourt, Zola, Daudet);

—June 8—the death of George Sand; Turgenev publishes an obituary article;

—Taras Shevchenko's *Kobzar* is published in Prague with Turgenev's "Reminiscences of Shevchenko".

1877—the novel *Virgin Soil* is published in the first issues of *Vestnik Evrope*;

—May (June)—Turgenev attends the trial of the South-Russian Workers' Alliance—one of the first proletarian organisations in Russia;

—June—Turgenev's last meeting with the fatally ill Nekrassov;

—follows the events of the Russo-Turkish war;

—receives information about the translation of *Virgin Soil* into French, English, German, Italian, Swedish, Polish, Serbian and Hungarian.

1878, January—Pushkin's letter to his wife, compiled and foreworded by Turgenev, are published;

—February—the date of his first poems in prose ("Village", "Conversation", "The Old Woman", "A Dog", and others);

—May 8 (20)—Turgenev responds delightedly to Lev Tolstoy's letter suggesting a reconciliation;

—June 4 (16)—an international literary congress opens in Paris, with Victor Hugo in the chair; Turgenev is elected its vice-president and makes an address, sharply criticised in the Russian press;

—July—meets Guy de Maupassant;

—August—stays with Tolstoy in Yasnaya Polyana;

—October—a trip to England, where he goes hunting in Scotland and visits Cambridge and Oxford.

1879, January—Turgenev's brother Nikolai dies; a trip to Russia for the funeral;

—February-March—Turgenev is paid nation-wide homage in Russia;

—June—Turgenev is notified that the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law has been conferred on him by the University of Oxford; he goes to England for the ceremony which is held on June 18; in London he meets the American author Henry James, Ralston and William Blake;

—December—Turgenev is attacked by the Russian press, which accuses him of connections with revolutionary emigres;

—many of his poems in prose are dated this year.

1880, February—Turgenev is in St. Petersburg, taking part in preparations for the Pushkin jubilee celebrations;

—May—spends two days in Yasnaya Polyana with Lev Tolstoy;

—is shaken by news about the death of Flaubert;

—June 16 (18) is present at the unveiling of Pushkin's monument in Moscow; the next day reads his "Speech about Pushkin" at a public session;

—July—Turgenev is back in Paris; is gratified to hear about amnesty granted to the Communards;

—this year the first stereotyped edition of *A Hunter's Sketches*, meticulously prepared by Turgenev, comes out; also the sixth edition of his works (Moscow, 1880, in ten volumes) which for the first time includes new excerpts from "Literary and Mundane Recollections".

1881, January—the sketch "Old Portraits" is published;

—January 28 (February 9)—Dostoyevsky dies; Turgenev intends to write an obituary article;

—March—Tsar Alexander II is assassinated; Turgenev condemns the terrorist act;

—his last year at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo; Turgenev says farewell to his mother count y;

—Lev Tolstoy, the poet Polonsky and the actress Savina come for a stay at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo;

—“The Song of Triumphant Love” is published in the November issue of *Vestnik Evropi*;

1882, January—the sketch “The Desperate One” is published in *Vestnik Evropi*;

—February—Turgenev informs his friends about his daughter Polina’s financial ruin and her imminent separation from her husband;

—March—the onset of Turgenev’s fatal illness;

—*Poems in Prose* are published in the December issue of *Vestnik Evropi*.

1883, January—“Clara Milich” (“After Death”) is published;

—Turgenev concludes preparatory work on the last volumes of the seventh edition of his works (St. Petersburg, in ten volumes), which came out posthumously;

—April—Alphonse Daudet visits Turgenev;

—May—the death of Louis Viardot;

—June—Turgenev dictates to Pauline Viardot in French his sketch “Fire at Sea” (published in Russian posthumously in the translation of A. Lukavina);

—June 29 (July 9)—farewell letter to Lev Tolstoy;

—August—Turgenev dictates to Pauline Viardot in various languages the story “The End”, his last work (published in the Russian translation of D. V. Grigorovich);

—August 22 (September 3)—Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev dies at 2 p. m. in Bougival.

**EXCERPTS FROM
'DOCUMENTS,
MEMOIRS, REVIEWS***

These études, novel at the time and eventually left far behind, were written by me abroad; some of them in painful moments of reflection on whether I should return home or not.

... Almost everything that I had seen aroused in me a feeling of confusion, of indignation, or aversion, if you like... I could not breathe the same air with or remain close to what I had come to hate; probably, I was wanting in self-control, in firmness. I had to go away in order to launch a stronger attack against my enemy from a distance. In my eyes this enemy had a definite image and a well-known name: this enemy was serfdom. Under this name I collected and concentrated everything against which I was determined to fight till the end, and which I swore never to become reconciled to...

I. Turgenev, *Literary and Mundane Recollections*

It is not surprising that "Khor and Kalinich", a small story, was such a success: in it the author approached the common people from a side from which no one had ever approached it yet.

... The success which this small story, published in *Sovremennik* under "Miscellany", enjoyed with the public came as a surprise to the author and made him continue with the hunter's sketches. His talent was quite clearly defined here, it was obvious that he did not have the gift for creating pure fiction, that he could not create characters and place them in such relations with one another from which novels become formed naturally. He can portray reality, the reality seen and studied by him, and he can create—if you wish—but only from ready-made material, provided by reality. He does not simply copy reality, it does not give him any ideas but it does suggest ideas, prompting

him, shall I say. He re-works the ready subject matter in conformity with his ideal, and by doing this he lends more life to the picture...

Vissarion Belinsky, *A Look at Russian Literature of 1847*

I have read *A Hunter's Sketches* with particular attention, and found that landlords in general are presented here from the most disadvantageous side, they are ridiculed and caricatured, and more often than not they are portrayed as reprehensible characters.

Prince Shirinsky-Shikhmatov, Minister for Public Education

Pyotr Ivanov Chertov, an underage landowner, who is under the guardianship of the uyezd nobility of which I am the marshal, has for a long time been leading a life unfitting for a nobleman: he is ruining his peasants, and treats them cruelly. His guardian, Counselor Roman Ivanovich Kortenevsky, has tried to curb Chertov's indulgence in luxury and his dangerous behaviour, but he has himself borne many insults from Chertov, and his very life has frequently been endangered.

I have watched Mister Chertov, and fearing from his actions not only for the safety of his estate, or for the peaceful administration of it, but even for his life, I approached him and offered him my personal advice, but even this had no success, and afterwards I received a letter from him, full of various indecent expressions. Consequently, Chertov was obliged, by order of his guardians, to promise in writing that he would refrain from committing any actions endangering society, his peasants, and himself. But he did not keep this promise long...

From a report addressed to the Governor of Orel by the marshal of the nobility of Mtsensk Uyezd (1839).
(One of the Chertovs, Turgenev's close neighbours, was, according to the author himself, the prototype of his Chertopkhanov.)

In the West, the nobility belonged to the victorious tribe, and the peasants—to the defeated; we find this distinction between the two tribes everywhere—in Italy, in France, in England... In Russia, however, both the noblemen and the peasants belong to one and the same tribe; they speak the same language, and they have the same cast of countenance...

My limited article does not allow me to give a detailed characterisation of the Russian peasant. All I shall say is that upon a close acquaintance with

him one cannot but appreciate his shrewdness, his good nature, and his natural intelligence.

From I. Turgenev's paper *A Few Remarks on the Russian Economy and the Russian Peasant* (1842)

... I believe that Mr. Turgenev's book will do more harm than good... Is it good, for instance, to show our literate people (after all, we cannot deny that *A Hunter's Sketches*, or any other book for that matter, might be read by the literate peasants and other persons of the lower estate) that our freeholders and peasants, whom the author has poetised to such an extent that he sees them as administrators, rationalists, romantics, idealists, enthusiasts and dreamers (heaven knows where he found such people!), that these peasants are oppressed, that the landlords, whom the author makes such mock of by portraying them as vulgar savages and madcaps, behave improperly and unlawfully; that the village priests grovel before the landlords; that the police and other officials take bribes; and, last but not least, that the peasant would live a better, happier life if he were free.

From a report of the censor, Y. Volkov (1852)

Khor with his practical sense and practical nature, his crude yet strong and clear mind, his profound contempt for women and his strong dislike of cleanliness and neatness, is the type of Russian muzhik who knows how to create a position of importance for himself in circumstances that are far from favourable. Kalinich, however, is an even fresher and fuller type of Russian muzhik: his is a poetic nature to be found among the common people.

Vissarion Belinsky, *A Look at Russian Literature of 1847*

The year before last, during the grouse shooting season, I visited one of the heroes of Turgenev's story *Khor and Kalinich*. I was put up for the night by Khor himself. The poet's masterly story roused my curiosity, and I made a very close study of my host's personality and home life. Khor is over 80 now, but the years are no burden for his colossal figure and his herculean physique. He was my guide in the forest, and as I followed him I became utterly exhausted, while he did not seem tired at all. Khor can read, but he has not taught the art to his children or grandchildren. He has an old book in Slavonic, and beside it he keeps his round copper-rimmed eyeglasses which he clips on his nose when he prepares to read. The mysteriously solemn air with which he began to read aloud, spelling the words out, was really some-

thing to see. The book obviously took him out of the usual flow of his life. It was not a pastime, it was sorcery.

From the recollections of Afanasi Fet, poet (1862)

... There is no evidence anywhere of the author's desire to set one class against the other; on the contrary, the arbitrariness of the landlords is shown more as a consequence of their legal rights, consolidated by tradition; as for the peasants, a complaint is rarely heard in their words and conversations; everything shows that they are almost resigned to their fate, the instances they narrate do not strike them as strange or unjust, because things have to be like that and not different, for that is how our society is organised. Only in a few of the stories does the author's habitually light and mocking tone give way to perhaps involuntary bursts of anger, but even so, he does not, in my opinion, overstep the limits of what is permissible for publication; such are the stories *The Steward* and *Two Country Gentlemen*, the latter ending with a sharp exclamation: "That's old Russia for you!"

From a paper by A. G. Troinitsky, member of the Council of Censors (1858)

The main personage in this story is a wealthy landlord, a retired guards officer Penochkin. His character is described with the most malicious irony. Penochkin the landlord is a despot, and Penochkin the man is a liberal, a coward and a scoundrel. After this, the author presents to the reader Penochkin's steward Sofron, an out-and-out swindler who robs his master and abuses the peasants. In spite of this, Penochkin calls him a statesman!

What impudence to give an illiterate muzhik a title that is conferred on men for important services rendered to their motherland! If, however, there is hidden irony in these words of Penochkin or the author, which is the same thing, making mock of statesmen, then it is all the more reprehensible, all the more unpardonable.

From the report of censor Y. Volkov

In *A Hunter's Sketches* there is no cruelty whatever in the depiction of the relations between landlords and peasants: in this respect, the book is outstripped by everything that appeared at the same time or later. The author does not incite the two classes to the slightest antagonism against each other, and, on the contrary, lends the character of their relations a comism and a subtle, barely perceptible irony by the mildness and artistry of his de-

scriptions... On the whole, he mainly portrays typical characters from the different classes of the population, and his purpose is to give a poetically true picture of types, localities and natural scenery, without straining and striving to show up some of the characters in a good and others in a bad light.

From the report submitted to the Censorship Committee in St. Petersburg by writer I. A. Goncharov, who held the office of censor (1858)

Turgenev's landlord is "humane" too, ... so humane, compared with Saltychikha, for instance, that he does not go to the stables in person to see that it has been arranged for Fyodor to be flogged. He is so humane that he does not see to it that the birch with which Fyodor is to be flogged has been soaked in salt water. He would never think of hitting or scolding a lackey, would this landlord; he only "arranges things" from a distance, like the educated man he is, in a gentle and humane manner, without noise, without fuss, without making a "public scene"...

V. I. Lenin, "In Memory of Count Heyden", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 56.

Do you know that Porfiry had an affair with the maid who looks after the linen? At last, it began to be quite indecent, scandalous really. And I told him long ago I would not let her marry him, she was no wife for him, that fool woman.

And then, when I received a complaint about him, I called him in and told him that since he would not listen to me he obviously did not want to serve me, and so I was compelled to part with him. He said then that he had been too young to know better and that now it would be dishonest to leave her. I replied that as he had asked for her hand he had done her no wrong, but if I did not give him my permission he could do nothing against me and would have to stop this nonsense.

Two days later he came in looking pale and carrying a letter in his hands. He put it on the table, and left.

And what do you think? He writes that he does not want to serve me because I am not grateful to him for his fifteen-year long service; that he wants to change his manner of living; that I must give him his freedom; that he feels suffocated in my service; apparently, he has read Pushkin.

I threw the letter into his insolent face... I sent him away without any trouble. However, he is your protégé. And Uncle (N. N. Turgenev) has had him put under arrest on bread and water.

From a letter to Turgenev from his mother dated June 11, 1843. The attempt of the serf feldsher Porfiry Kudryashov to defy his mistress has been used in the story *The Counting-House*

I am re-reading *A Hunter's Sketches*, and I cannot understand how censor Lvov could have passed them for print. These sketches are an orderly series of attacks, a battery volley on the way landlords live. All this lends tremendous importance to the book, irrespective of its literary merits.

From a letter by Ivan Aksakov, writer

In England, as I was told by George Eliot, Turgenev was little read though much appreciated. The life he described was too remote... All that the English could appreciate in Turgenev was his artistic style, but this could be shared by only the few genuine lovers and connoisseurs of literature. In America, on the other hand, the recent abolition of slavery had engendered a sort of kinship with those Russian writers who spoke out most loudly for freeing the serfs.

When I was in the United States I myself had occasion to witness how well the book is known to readers there, to the middle class and not only to high society. Turgenev has succeeded in founding something like a small school in the American novelists' midst.

From the recollections of M. Kovalevsky (1908)

What have we, or what has France, that can be for one moment compared with "A Sportsman's Sketches" or the volume entitled "Strange Tales"? In these stories the genius of Turgueneff is seen in its original splendour... In reading them the *littérateur* is conscious of something absolutely new; they are absolutely new in form as in matter, or can they be traced back to any root.

George Moore, from "Impressions and Opinions"

Your peasants and your gentlemen are presented in very bold relief. It is a new world to which you have admitted us, and no historical monument could give us as good an idea of Russia as these people, so well studied by you, and their mores, so well seen by you... You are a realist to see everything, a poet to make everything more beautiful, a great heart to pity everyone and to understand everything.

George Sand, from her dedication to Turgenev in her "Pierre Bonnin"

I was certain that you would appreciate Turgenev's book (*A Hunter's Sketches*). There is so much life in them and such remarkably powerful talent. Compassion for mankind and artistic feeling are two elements which are very difficult to combine, and rarely have they blended so perfectly, making such

a well-balanced whole. On the other hand, no less remarkable is the combination of the most intimate realities of life with a profound understanding of nature in all its poetry.

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From a letter written by Fyodor Tyutchev, poet, to his wife,
dated December 10, 1852

Sometimes I just feel too lazy to write, then I pick up—guess what?—Ivan Sergeyevich's book: it's so invigorating that my laziness and suchlike nonsense vanishes without a trace and the urge to write is born in me. But here's the rub: I become absorbed in the book and before I know where I am it's dusk.

That is precisely what happened yesterday, yes, yesterday: the moment these Russians began passing before me and the birch groves, fields and meadows rose in all their variety . . . it was goodbye to Shanghai, to camphor and bamboo trees and shrubs, to the sea—I was oblivious to everything. All around me was Orel, Kursk, Zhizdra and Bezhin Meadow.

Ivan Goncharov in a letter written aboard the frigate
Pallada during a round-the-world voyage in 1853

Bezhin meadow is the pasture where the village boys drive the herds of horses on hot summer nights to graze . . . Huddling round the fire, the boys tell each other stories, the kind of stories that are usually told at night. They go over all the Russian village tales about water nymphs, brownies and goblins, and remember their friend Vasya who drowned the year before and now entices the young fishermen into the deep. This is something midway between a nanny's tales and the tales of Hoffman, and yet it is something different, something more natural and serious; the poet with his remarkable skill has brought us to the desired pitch: he made the ground speak before the children did, and it turned out that the ground and the children had the same thing to say. These young ones are merely the interpreters of the old Slav world; they remake in their own way the *Lay of Igor's Host*, this pantheistic epic of remote ages from which all Russian poetry has stemmed.

E.-M. de Vogüé, from "Œuvres dernières"

When I was reading this first book by Turgenev, I often laid the book down on my knees to prolong the pleasure as best I could; I revelled in the description of the naive mores and the charming landscapes, a delightful collection of which was contained in every one of the stories. When I finished my reading, I made a point of obtaining all the existing translations of Turgenev to enjoy this writer to the full. With these books and thanks to him I spent the whole summer in the same enraptured mood.

Lamartine, from his article on Turgenev, 1861

What did Turgenev do for the Russian people, meaning the common people? Unquestionably he did very much—both directly and indirectly. Indirectly—with the whole of his literary activity which raised considerably the moral and intellectual level of the Russian intelligentsia. Directly—with his book, *A Hunter's Sketches*, which initiated a whole literature dedicated to the people and their needs.

Mikhail Saltykov-Schedrin

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